

My Education

Governor / Stakeholder Training & Seed Funding Delivery

*In January 2016, NIACE and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion
merged to form the Learning and Work Institute*

Learning and Work Institute

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FAMILY LEARNING WORKS



Family Learning improves health, employability, and increases involvement in community culture and sport

Family Learning must be.....



Part of early years' provision at **every** school

Funded to cut the costs of spending on **vulnerable** families

An integral part of any adult learning and skills strategy



1 in 3 children leave school without a good GCSE in English



1 in 4 adults have maths skills below those expected of a 9 year old

In Wales, only **20%** of children who are eligible for free school meals achieve A*- C grades in the core GCSE subjects compared to **52%** of children who are not eligible

80% of participants in family learning programmes progress in learning and/or life and work

Background & Context

My Education

My Education was originally designed by First Campus to explore parents' experience and barriers to being involved in school life. The project aimed to develop a "whole school" approach to enable the co-production of educational outcomes with families and the wider community.

The research project aimed to provide young people with the skills to become active researchers to gather feedback from parents, to explore the barriers and to make recommendations for practical solutions to improve school & community engagement - the project was delivered in five secondary schools in South East Wales.

Using mixed methodology, the researchers explored parents' engagement with school, what current barriers exist and what can be done to remove them. It was anticipated that the findings would be used by the senior leadership within each School to inform the family learning and parental engagement elements of their school development plans and the development of appropriate action plans.

Some key messages from the research;

- 70% of parents said that they would like to be more involved in their child's schooling
- Parents thought that primary schools were a lot more approachable and welcoming than secondary schools
- Parents understood how important their role was in supporting their children's education. They saw a real value in helping their children with their homework or simply making sure their children were doing it.
- Some had concerns about the transition from primary to secondary provision and worried that their children would struggle with the change in surroundings and school work expectations.

Learning and Work Institute & Family Learning

Learning and Work Institute (L&W) is an independent policy and research organisation, dedicated to promoting lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion. L&W brings together 90 years of combined history from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion.

As NIACE, our independent Inquiry into Family Learning in England and Wales, **Family Learning Works**¹, demonstrated the importance of the learning family in encouraging both adults' and children's learning. Family Learning is a targeted intervention. It is strategically planned, with specific outcomes, even if delivered in a semi-formal or informal way. It targets families where levels of skills are poor, and where parents may not know the best way to support their children's learning.

Where parents have poor basic skills, it will come as no surprise that their children may also struggle; where parents are living in poverty, with poor health, in poor housing, it is also clear that they may struggle to support their children's education. Family Learning seeks to work with children and their parents, to improve skills, and to develop a culture of learning in the home.

Although Family Learning can be delivered in a range of settings, most programmes happen in primary schools; this enables those working with children to work with those specialising in working with adults, to design a proper intervention, targeting families. Formal Family Learning programmes will include, for example, family literacy, where parents work with a qualified tutor to improve their own skills, their children are part of an intervention to improve their language skills, and a third strand develops the skills of the adults to support their children outside of school, developing their literacy through home based activity.

There is not enough research about the impact of Family Learning, particularly quantitative analysis, but there is enough for us to be very sure that it is one of the most powerful interventions a school can implement. We know it raises standards, skills and aspirations; we know it has a powerful impact on confidence; we know, in adults, it has an impact on health, job skills, engagement in democratic processes, and attending school meetings. And, most importantly, we know it develops learning families - families where learning, doing homework, aspiring to improve, taking on new challenges, is perceived as perfectly normal. We have data, for example from Sheffield LA, and outlined in '*Family Literacy Works*' (NFER, 1996), to show significant improvements in children's skills, confidence, behaviour and attendance. We have evidence that Family Learning builds parents' skills and confidence to access the job market. Over the years there have been some, but not enough, in-depth research projects looking at the value of Family Learning. All the research has

¹ NIACE (2013) Family Learning Works. The Inquiry into Family Learning in England and Wales <https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/family-learning-works/>

shown the impact on adults and children, on families and communities; impact includes improved skills, gaining qualifications, improved confidence, parents reporting better ability to support their children, changes in health such as smoking and obesity, and more and better engagement in communities. For example, '*Family Learning: a review of the research literature*, NRDC 2012. However, there hasn't been a single, serious quantitative study, using control groups since the publication of '*Family Literacy Works*' (NFER, 1996). There has been some, limited, attempts to collect quantitative data such as Sheffield local authority (2015)

Learning and Work Institute (formerly NIACE, and before that the Basic Skills Agency) has led on Family Learning in England and Wales for many years, and has developed a set of principles for excellent quality Family Learning:

Family Learning is about engaging families in learning together.

Family Learning is about empowering families to take control.

Family Learning recognises context and culture.

Family Learning starts from a positive not a deficit model.

Family Learning is planned, funded and delivered at a strategic level, whether local or national.²

Local authorities across Wales were part of the original rollout of Family Learning in the 1990s, and continued to deliver Family Learning, usually through adult education services; but additionally, a whole range of other agencies became involved in the delivery, some of which emerged as Parenting Programmes, or Community Education, rather than Family Learning. In 2015 the Welsh Government (WG) grant set aside for Family Learning was withdrawn and advice from WG to providers encouraged them to negotiate local arrangements with other budget holders (Communities First, Families First and the Pupil Deprivation Grant).

A report from Professor David Egan, commissioned by the Bevan Foundation³, "After Pisa – a way forward for education in Wales?" highlighted the impact of poverty on educational achievement and called for a new approach to education and community partnership and highlighted the importance of families and communities in influencing educational achievement. He suggested that family involvement in education, particularly in the most disadvantaged communities, is one of the greatest untapped resources in our education system.

² '*Family Learning Works*', NIACE 2013²

<https://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/family-learning-works/>

³ <https://www.bevanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/After-PISA-Report.pdf>

My Education & L&W

Training & Seed Funding: School Governors & Stakeholders

Following the findings of the My Education research project, L&W were commissioned by First Campus to develop and pilot a training day on Family Learning/Parental Engagement for School Governors and Stakeholders.

L&W agreed to;

- Develop and deliver Governor/Stakeholder training on family learning and parental engagement initially piloted with three schools and then rolled out to a further two secondary schools;
- Provide seed funding and support for planning follow up delivery of Family Learning and parental engagement sessions;
- Capture interviews and learner responses through a short film.

The training was designed to;

- raise awareness of the value and impact of family learning and parental engagement within school clusters to strengthen the school development plan;
- target governors and the senior leadership team within the school cluster;
- involve a wider group of stakeholders from community/learning organisations to widen the school connections and build a support network for the delivery of family learning.

The training day was also developed to encourage each school to explore the use of the Pupil Development (Deprivation) Grant and to look at opportunities for investing in wider interventions – including adult/family learning.

The training coincided with the launch of the Welsh Government's **FACE (Family and Community Engagement) Toolkit** for schools – a collection of resources and practical advice for schools.⁴ The Toolkit was used to reinforce the messages given in each training session and for participants to take away as resources.

The training was initially delivered with three school clusters – Willows High School in Cardiff, Tonypandy Community College & Rhymney Comprehensive School.

⁴ <http://learning.gov.wales/resources/browse-all/family-and-community-engagement-toolkit/?lang=en>

Attendance at all sessions was good (58 participants), comprising of teachers, governors and other stakeholders including Communities First, the Open University, Adult Learning Wales, ACL practitioners from FE and local authority provision.

The training consisted of;

- overview of the My Education Research project and outcomes;
- an introduction to Family Learning, history, approach and impact;
- discussion around existing good practice and films to illustrate the impact⁵ on schools, parents and children who have engaged;
- action planning around school development plans and the introduction of family learning.

Seed Funding

Following a review of these training sessions, the project was widened and developed to include an additional seed fund of up to £1,000 for each school to develop a family/adult learning intervention. Two schools were added to the network, St Martin's School, Caerphilly and Lewis School, Pengam.

The first three pilot schools were revisited with additional sessions developed to assist them in the planning of their seed funded project.

Participants from St Martin's and Lewis took part in the Governor/Stakeholder Training sessions and were encouraged to map their seed funding project plan at each session.

An overview of the activity developed with seed funding:

Following the training and planning session participants agreed an action plan for developing and delivering a family learning/parental engagement intervention.

Willows High School

On 29 September 2016, Willows hosted an Open Evening for parents in association with STAR Communities First cluster. The Open Evening was timed shortly after the opening of the **Learning Lounge** a dedicated space created for adult and family learning opportunities. A mix of activities and opportunities were planned for the

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUpk2Vfkyus> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBGv7Sgk8Bg>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFjtHj5RgMM>

evening – a range of adult learning opportunities as well as creative workshops for families, information stands and a pop up café.

Local providers included;

Organisation	Offering
Cardiff and Vale College	Course info and sign up
Cardiff Met	Course info and sign up
Cardiff University	Course info and sign up
Neighbourhood Learning	Course info, sign up and taster sessions
WEA	Course info, sign up and taster sessions
Open University	Course info and sign up
Cardiff Met Complimentary therapies	Taster session and massage
Willows High School	Info and sign up to currently running courses
Willows High Science Dept	Sign up to science for parents course
Moorland Primary school	Sign up to current courses and parent info
Stacey Primary	Sign up to current courses and parent info
Adamsdown Primary	Sign up to current courses and parent info
Communities First	Sign up to courses, info and community engagement
Communities 4 Work	Info on FE,HE, into work and CV writing and job application support
Sova	Engaging and supporting parents back into training or work
Communities First- Health and Wellbeing	Eat well plate demo and information
Switched On Team	Info and awareness raising
Cardiff Dietetics	Awareness and info sessions
Throw away music	Recycled music instrument workshops for children
St John Ambulance	Sign up to first aid courses, demos and general info
Eastmoors Youth Centre	Sign up to DofE, invitation to youth provision, information sharing and support to NEET young people
Spice Time banking	Offering sign up and awareness of volunteering and volunteering opportunities
Nicky Condon	Jewellery making workshop
Marmalade	Pop Up café with free refreshments
STAR volunteers	Face painting and children's crafts

114 people came to the event and accessed information and advice, have-a-go sessions, local adult learning providers and staff from Willows were on hand to engage and make contact. There was also a demonstration of the Family Science project which the school has delivered, supported by York University.

Feedback from providers was positive – many reported parents signing up to many different courses but not enough to run full courses. Some providers suggested they might trial some of the courses which had most interest in the evening.

The Learning Lounge is now a well-used resource for the community. Many parents from the Open Evening have regularly attended courses and workshops. The school is reporting a positive impact on parental engagement and attendance at school events because of the relationship building through the courses at the Learning Lounge.

Courses delivered have included; IELTS with 8 people attending, Working with Children with 8 people attending, Cake Decorating with 8 people attending, 7 of these individuals have gained a qualification from completing the course. A follow-on course has started with 15 people attending, The Open University sessions "People and Society" had 6 people attending, Welsh for Families with 15 people attending, Basic Maths with 10 people attending, all of whom should achieve an accreditation, Breaking Taboos, 6 people attending, Parent Nurture Programme with 12 people attending. There is also a weekly coffee and information morning, which hosts the monthly 'Meet the Head' session. This group is regularly attended by up to 20 people.

The Learning Lounge and the activities it offers are fully supported by the Senior Leadership Team, who see the value in this resource, and the positive impact it has on other areas of home-school relationships. They also promote the ethos of the school being the heart of the community, for support, help and guidance through an open-door policy and access into learning opportunities for the whole community.

A follow up engagement event was supported for Adult Learners' Week, June 2017 co-ordinated by Communities First in partnership with Willows, the event reached 123 people – many from the local feeder primary schools.

Participant attitude/ participants' achievements

The participants to the event enjoyed it, with many signing up for courses that are due to start in September. It provided an opportunity to try things that had they had never tried before whilst not being forced to commit to it.

After the event

The event was very rewarding in the sense that it provided an opportunity to strengthen community links between the local schools. It provided an opportunity for many of the primary school pupils and parents to see the high school.

St Martin's High School

A half day open afternoon/evening was delivered at the School on 20th September 2016, co-ordinated in partnership with the Engagement Officer at St Martins and Communities First.

A wide range of stakeholders contributed to the session including:

- Essential Skills and Family Learning, Caerphilly CBC
- Family Information Service, Caerphilly CBC
- Communities First (various projects)
- LIFT project
- The Hub CCBC
- Supporting people
- Careers Wales
- Newport Mind
- WEA
- Coleg y Cymoedd
- Supporting Family Change, Caerphilly CBC
- Parent Network
- Action for Children
- Homestart Caerphilly.

The sessions provided the opportunity for parents to find out about the range of services available to them and to start conversations about support or their interest in accessing learning opportunities. Despite widespread promotion footfall was disappointing at this event, with 12 families attending. However, it was reported that the families who attended were those who the school were keen to engage with and support.

Developing the “Coping with Comp” course for families

Following this open session, the findings of the My Education Research project were reviewed and it was decided to focus on issues around transition between the High School and St James Primary School on the Lansbury Estate.

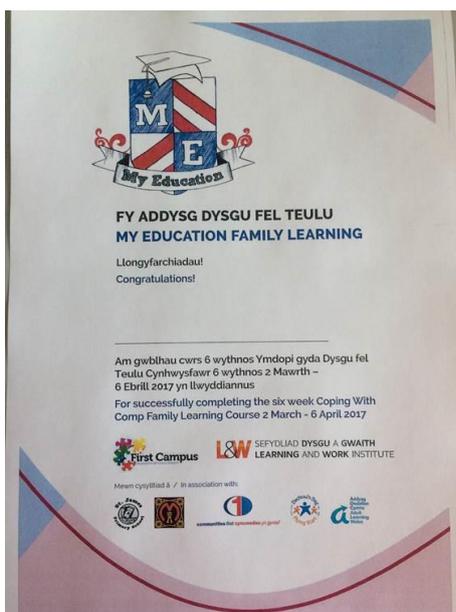
A six-week course was developed for families in Year 5 & 6 to support transition from primary to secondary and to equip families with tips and techniques for coping with the move to high school and to build confidence in families to support their child's education.

Using materials from Flying Start, the course was developed to reflect the key issues around transition identified by both schools. The programme, which ran from February to April 2017, was delivered by a tutor from Adult Learning Wales, supported by Flying Start and key staff from St Martin's as well as a parent advocate. Sessions were delivered at St James Primary School with visits to St Martin's. There was a good level of interest in the course from parents at St James and some requests that the timing of the course should be delivered more flexibly to allow working parents to attend.

Ten parents engaged with the course and all of those who participated were presented with certificates at a celebration event on 7th April. Feedback from both parents and children was extremely positive.

- All parents felt engaged/included by St James and St Martins by having the opportunity to accessing this project
- All parents felt that St James and St Martins had given them an opportunity to learn about how to deal with issues they and their children might face at comp.
- All parents felt that by having the opportunity to be involved in their child's transition, they were setting a good example for their children to be able to cope with everyday school stresses
- All parents would take part in another activity with the school
- Three parents went on to enrol on a Maths Course
- All children felt part of St James and St Martins School by being included in the project
- All children felt that St James and St Martins had given them an opportunity to learn about how to deal with issues they may face at comprehensive school
- All children felt that by having the opportunity to be involved in this project they would cope better in comprehensive school.

Both St James and St Martin's have expressed an intention to continue with this intervention.



A follow up session was delivered in St James Primary School during Adult Learners' Week in response to requests from parents to provide more information and advice about further learning and next steps. A range of providers were invited to attend (Cardiff University, Communities for Work, Coleg y Cymoedd, Careers Wales, the Open University) along with adult learners who could talk about their experiences of engaging and progressing through adult learning.

15 people from the Lansbury Estate attended the session, three signed up to access courses with Coleg y Cymoedd. The attendance was disappointing and highlighted issues around

communication and promotion within the school and wider stakeholders and a lack of joint planning with the parents who had engaged on the Coping with Comp course.

Tonypandy Community College

Delivery at Tonypandy initially focused on trying to develop a Family Learning programme with feeder primary schools to develop relations with the parents and children who would be moving up to the college following school mergers. This however proved difficult to co-ordinate and so the focus of delivery was on transition. Activity focussed on developing the college's approach to transition and moving it from something which had been entirely focused on children to involving parents by offering informal learning opportunities during scheduled Transition Days at the College.

Session 1

The first session was attended by 13 parents, where they had refreshments before embarking on a flower arranging session. During the session there were visits from the Transition Co-ordinator and the Acting Headteacher. The parents enjoyed the session and were keen to attend the next.

Session 2

The second session had slightly lower attendance of 10 and the parents attending learnt about healthy eating, carried out taste tasting of exotic fruits and made fresh fruit meringue nests with cream. There have been informal consultations carried out to identify if any of the parents attending would be interested in more formal learning and Food Hygiene and First Aid were the two courses that parents would like to attend.

Moving Forward

The parents were keen to maintain attendance at the Transition Tuesdays and found the informal approach useful in gaining information about the college. They found that through this introduction to the college, they could ask questions in a relaxed environment. They were keen to try out new activities and learn new skills whilst meeting new parents from other primary schools. 5 of the 6 primary schools have been represented in the parents' attendance.

Progression

Tonypandy Community College has applied and been successful in accessing an Awards for All Grant which will allow the parents who have engaged with Transition Tuesday to complete follow on courses in First Aid, Food Safety, Flower Arranging and Healthy Eating.

Rhymney High School

Following discussions and planning sessions it was agreed that Caerphilly Family Learning would develop a programme to target the feeder primary schools with family learning activity. Family Learning groups were set up in four primary schools: Fochriw, Pontlottyn, Abertysswg and Brynawel. 37 sessions were delivered, reaching 22 adults and 24 children.

School	Adults	Children	Number of sessions
Abertysswg	4	4	9
Brynawel	5	7	9
Fochriw	8	8	12
Pontlottyn	5	5	7
Totals	22	24	37

At Pontlottyn, the programme targeted the Foundation Phase and at Fochriw worked with Year 1 and 2. The focus was on numeracy and followed TAPAS MATHS, which is a practical and hands on approach to improving numeracy skills. The funding was used to purchase a backpack of resources for families to take home at the end of the course. Parents were showed how to use the resources, to enable them to continue to use them at home once the course had finished.

At Brynawel and Abertysswg the programme targeted Key stage 2. The focus was on design technology and enabled families to practice and develop their numeracy, literacy and problem-solving skills. The funding was used to purchase materials needed to make a blow football game, rockets, kite boats and motorised cars. Sessions included planning, designing, measuring and evaluating each project. Families were very enthusiastic about the programme and grew in confidence as the course progressed.

What Worked?

Groups were due to start in April 2017 of the summer term. Workshops were run at the end of the spring term with a focus on fun activities to encourage difficult to reach families to engage with the programme. This worked well, as contact was already established with families before the programme started properly in April.

The resources really helped to engage with families and to offer something different to appeal to both children and adults. The fact that groups could be given maths resources to go home acted both as an enticement for parents to attend, as well as providing the opportunity for continued learning for the children at home.

What was more difficult?

At Pontlottyn there were some issues with negotiating a dedicated space for delivery. The main hall had been allocated but some sessions had to be cancelled at short notice due to special assemblies. This resulted in parents turning up to cancelled sessions and not turning up when sessions were taking place. Other rooms in the school were often allocated but not actually available on the day.

In the other three schools, families wanted to continue the programme beyond the initial six-week course and this was delivered with funding from within the Adult Community Learning budget. At Fochriw, a request was made to return in September 2017 to work on TAPAS maths with Nursery and Reception children and this will be sustained although with more limited resources.

What were the key outcomes?

Family learning providers reported successful engagement with families from the Rhymney area and were pleased to engage with those families who had been identified as most in need of support with literacy and numeracy and who had previously proved difficult to engage with.

Delivery resulted in improved numeracy skills for adults and children at Fochriw and Pontlottyn Primary Schools and improved literacy, numeracy and problem solving at Abertwssyg and Brynawel.

Of the 22 adults engaged, 20 met their targets. **91% of the adults showed an improvement in their essential skills.**

Of the 24 children engaged, 19 met their targets. **79% of children showed an improvement in literacy/numeracy.**

Families at Brynawel and Abertysswg will be continuing with their learning in the Autumn 2017 term. Brynawel will be moving onto a numeracy programme and Abertwssyg will be moving onto literacy.

Next Steps

Caerphilly Family Learning will be returning to three out of four schools to continue Family Learning programmes. Delivery will focus on Fochriw to target children in Nursery Reception and Year 1, Abertysswg will be moving on to a literacy course and Brynawel will be continuing with numeracy next term.

The TAPAS and Design Technology schemes of work were very successful at engaging parents and providing resources and content that kept them interested in the programme. This is something that will be developed by the Family Learning team for the future.

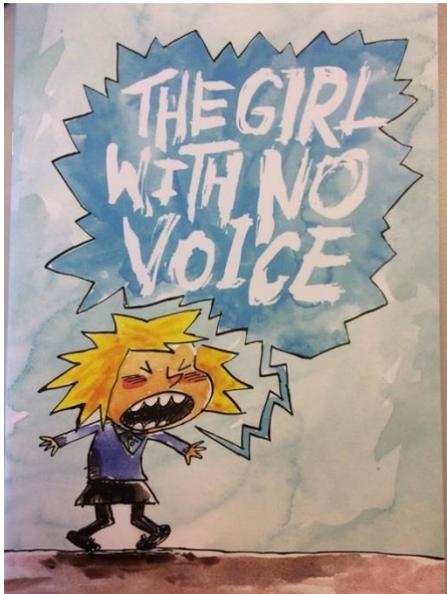
At Pontlottyn, sessions were delivered in the morning, as the school had identified this to be a good time to engage with parents when they were dropping their children off at school. In practice this did not work as the school often needed the hall for a special assembly and some sessions had to be cancelled.

Lewis School

Following the Training Session, Derwendeg Primary School was targeted for the delivery of family learning activity utilising the seed funding. The Engagement Officer at Derwendeg identified a cohort of parents who were beginning to engage with some activities within the school and had indicated that they would like to take part in some structured activity.

Communities First took a lead in supporting this delivery and working with the Parent Network a 10-week programme of storytelling and literacy activities were developed.

The project resulted in this group of 10 parents working with their children to develop an illustrated story book, "The Girl with No Voice". The book was printed (a copy for each family in the school) with an additional £2k budget from Communities First. The book was launched at a whole school assembly, with each of the parents who had been involved in the project receiving certificates to recognise their contribution.



Follow up sessions were planned as progression for the parents engaged with key workers planning options for sessions on literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, employability and access to HE and to explore opportunities to open this up more widely to other parents.

Film-making

Throughout the project L&W worked with a film maker to capture views, outcomes and the impact of the project. A compilation of activity in all five projects has been produced to capture learner and stakeholder comments. The film can be viewed [here](#).

Observations

The work undertaken in this project, and the results shown in this report, highlight a whole range of ways in which schools attempted to build Family & Adult Learning interventions which fitted their context and culture.

Unlocking additional budgets

The project demonstrated that a community of stakeholders around the school could contribute additional resources – in some cases this was additional budget – in other cases it was expertise, staffing and free learning opportunities. The engagement of other stakeholders builds pathways for adults to progress and provides the school with social capital and wider networks. The example of Monkton Priory School (see Appendix 5) illustrates the power of creating partnerships and how the use of some of the PDG budget has unlocked additional match funding from other sources.

Family Learning & Place

Feedback from participants on the training sessions was overwhelmingly positive about the impact and value of family learning and the illustration of this through the case study of Monkton Priory School example was powerful.

There were difficulties with translating a traditional “Family Learning” model to a high school setting. Family Learning has been demonstrated to be successful in primary school settings and widely used with those in early years.

The focus on **transition** seems to be an area where a family approach is beneficial. The experience at St Martin’s and St James was overwhelmingly positive for both schools, the parents and children involved. The framework developed for the 6-week course could be developed and tested further. It does seem to offer an approach where parents feel more engaged in the shift from primary to secondary and are able to use the course as a vehicle to build positive relationships with their secondary school. The course also opened a dialogue with parents about their next steps and their own skills development and aspirations.

A wider adult learning offer – the school as a hub

The experience at Willows High School is a positive one – the creation of a dedicated space for community learning activities – **the Learning Lounge** - has been significant and the range of classes delivered has grown alongside the take-up of this provision by a range of adults. Support for this activity is embedded within the senior leadership team at the school and the Head views parental engagement and support for their learning as a key part of their strategy going forward. The courses

delivered in the Learning Lounge do not always follow the traditional family learning model – for the majority the focus is on adult learning.

The Willows model provides an opportunity to develop more family learning provision perhaps as a “**hub**” for their cluster of primary schools. The feeder primary schools showed a keen interest in being involved in the Family Science initiative.

Focusing on subject specific areas might offer the opportunity for secondary schools to embrace a family learning approach in collaboration with their feeder primary schools – this could include developing opportunities around STEM subjects, Digital Skills or languages.

What has emerged is further evidence that family learning can provide a “hook” for engagement for parents, it offers the opportunity to create a dialogue with parents about their own skills. Feedback from the “Coping with Comp” course illustrated that many parents felt that once their children had moved onto secondary provision then they were ready to take stock of their lives and many reported wanting to move on to develop their skills, qualifications and employment opportunities.

The experience of Monkton Priory Primary School has demonstrated that in a relatively isolated area, with many parents not working or in low skilled employment, the school can become a **community learning hub** offering a range of provision from family learning and informal adult learning to accredited skills, higher-level learning and degree programmes. Access to adult learning assists in developing a stronger learning culture amongst families in the community

“After Pisa: A way forward for Education in Wales”⁶ provides the example of the Harlem Children’s Zone model in New York, initiated in the 1990’s in one of the highest poverty areas in the USA – it adopts a holistic approach to education – one that addresses family and community factors. Within this report there are examples of developing community engagement within schools and the experience of Millbrook Primary School on the Bettws estate in Newport reflects this.

Parents Evenings & Transition Days

It was recognised that more use could be made of Parents Evenings and Transition Days to engage parents. This could include inviting other agencies to be present at these events (adult learning providers/family services) so that parents have an opportunity to find out about opportunities to develop their own skills or raise issues of concern. Asking parents more frequently about what they might need to help them support the learning in school could be built into events or communication between the school and home.

⁶ <https://www.bevanfoundation.org/publications/pisa-way-forward-education-wales/>

Vision and staffing

The experience of the schools in this project demonstrated that if family/adult learning and community engagement is to be embedded within the school development plan then it requires commitment from the Headteacher and leadership team. A clear vision of what will be achieved through programmes to engage with parents and measuring outcomes that demonstrate the impact on achievement of both children and adults and how this contributes to the school development plan. Where there is investment in building engagement with parents and the wider community then there are pay-offs with parents becoming increasingly engaged in school life.

Additionally, it was evident from the experience of those connected with this project that a committed resource of **Engagement Officers** was vital. The ability to have dedicated staff who could build the trust of parents who were able to listen to their concerns and to network with stakeholders so that provision could be put in place to respond to need.

Resources, funding and sustainability

It is clear from the outcomes of this project that resourcing family learning and adult engagement activity can be challenging. There is scope to achieve change through creative use of the Pupil Development Grant and there are examples of Communities First Match funding and Communities First funding contributing additional resources, both cash and in-kind to this project. However, the changing policy towards tackling poverty has made this approach vulnerable. The Communities First programme is reducing significantly. The Welsh Government grant funding for Family Learning provision across Wales provided a structure for services to support schools, however the withdrawal of this grant has meant that there is patchy provision across Wales, locally negotiated, with reduced opportunities for sharing and developing practice and a lack of join up to national policy.

Recommendations

1. The Family Learning Training for schools and stakeholders could be developed to include a focus on family/adult learning and impact on attainment. The training programme could be commissioned and rolled out to schools or delivered as part of Inset Days and would serve to reinforce the messages in the WG FACE Toolkit.
2. There are examples of schools using PDG budgets effectively to unlock funding from other sources and to enable parental engagement in adult learning. Development work should be undertaken with Regional Education Consortia to share best practice and to encourage more schools to use their PDG funding to support this activity.
3. There should be clear advice to schools on the use of PDG to build the skills of parents and there may be potential to set aside some of the PDG budget for this.
4. Building on the success of the 'Coping with Comp' project, funding should be allocated to rollout provision to more clusters. This would better support transition from Years 6 to Year 7 and to engage parents at a potential transition point when they are looking to develop their skills and employment opportunities.
5. Future additional funding should be provided to schools only where there is clear and demonstrable commitment from senior leadership and governors to parental engagement through adult/family learning. There are clear educational benefits for pupils of parental engagement and adult learning provision and this should form part of the overall school vision.
6. Evidence from a range of schools supports the importance of Engagement Officers to build trust with parents, engage other stakeholders and to ensure provision is provided in a way that is timely, appropriate and meets the needs of families. This will be of even greater importance following the decision to end Communities First provision.
7. Further research investment could be made to assess the impact on attainment in schools when family/adult learning interventions are in place.
8. Further development work could be undertaken to shape family learning provision through a specific focus on subject areas – this could be in STEM, Digital Skills or languages.

Follow up/seed fund delivery

School	Event	Participants
Willows High School	Open evening for parents	114
	IELTS	8
	Cake decorating class	8
	Welsh for families	15
	Basic Maths	10
	Breaking taboos	6
	Parent nurture programme	12
	Meet the Head	20
	Follow up engagement event	123
St Martin's High School	Half day open afternoon/evening.	12 families
	Coping with Comp	10
St James' Primary School	Follow up session - information and advice about further learning and next steps	15
Tonypany Community College	Flower arranging	13
	Health eating	10
Rhymney	Abertysswg Design Technology	8
	Brynawel Design Technology	13
	Fochriw Numeracy	16
	Pontlottyn Numeracy	10
Lewis School	Storytelling and literacy	10
Derwendeg Primary		

Evaluation responses from the training sessions

In what ways was it relevant to you and your work?

- Family learning is the future of school learning
- To engage with partners with the plan to engage with adults
- I can offer adult education classes/courses – just up to schools to decide what they want
- Very relevant as I am currently writing the SDP and targets for family engagement/ learning
- Transition and Year 5/6 stuff – perfect
- Community engagement, family learning
- It was not relevant to my work, but as a governor, I will discuss with our new Head in September
- Any programme that enables our pupils and parents improve confidence in learning is of benefit to the whole community
- Family engagement is such a wide umbrella. Lots of food for thought
- I work with young people aged 16-18 who are NEET or in danger of becoming so. Their involvement in family learning impacts on their future
- Community development work. Caerphilly Adult Education (WEA)
- Work with families, good way forward
- Showing where to go – parent engagement – family learning

Can you say in what ways it might change your practice? Is there anything you might do because of the training?

- Prioritise family learning
- Creating partnerships with local schools
- More ideas for family learning as well as engagement
- Concentrate on Welsh Bac
- Discuss it as a possible additional initiative to prevent a young person from becoming NEET
- More contact with schools
- Looking at what we can offer in the future
- Shows where I need to progress to

Training Sessions

School	Date	Numbers attended
Willows High School	21 April 2016	7
Rhymney Comprehensive	19 May 2016	13
Tonypandy	22 April 2016	12
St Martin's School	20 May 2016	9
Lewis School, Pengam	12 July 2016	17

Coping with Comp Project

Spring Term 2017

Aim

- To strengthen parental engagement with St James
- Encouraging parents to engage with school in Transition Activities
- To improve children's/parent's relationship with St Martins
- Support transition from primary to secondary
- Equip families with tips and techniques for coping with comprehensive school
- To build confidence in families to support their children's education

Actions Taken

- NF and RD collaborated with WAE, Flying Start Family Lives Programme, GAVO, First Campus further education and family learning and L&W to devise a 6 week programme in a family learning style set up to engage children and parents with both school and helping them uncover some fears about transitioning to comp and how to overcome issues at St Martins.

Results

Parents

- 100% of parents felt engaged/included by St James and St Martins by having the opportunity to accessing this project
- 100% of parents felt that St James and St Martins had given them an opportunity to learn about how to deal with issues they and their children might face at comp.
- 100% of parents felt that by having the opportunity to be involved in their child's transition, they were setting a good example for their children to be able to cope with everyday school stresses
- 100% of parents felt more confident supporting and encouraging their children to think about how to deal with issues they may face in comp and who to turn to
- 100% of parents would partake in another activity with the school
- 100% of parents rated the family engagement at St James as good or very good.
- 3 parents went on to enrol in a Maths Course held in the summer term at St James so they can further support their child by increasing their own maths knowledge and skills

Children

- 100% of children felt part of St James and St Martins School by being included in the project
- 100% of children felt that St James and St Martins had given them an opportunity to learn about how to deal with issues they may face at comprehensive school
- 100% of children felt that by having the opportunity to be involved in this project they would cope better in comprehensive school.
- 100% of children felt more confident to deal with issues that may arise and know who they could turn to for support in St Martins.
- 100% of children said they enjoyed taking part in the project
- 100% of children rated the project as “good” or “very good”

Weekly Sessions

- Session 1 - “Hopes And Fears”
100% of families rated this session as “good” or “very good”
Comments – “Useful information....left feeling a little easier about the changeover from primary to comp...feel like we know a lot more about the school my child will be attending....Good activities and talking about comp....it was good to talk to other mums and dads and children....It was good to hear that other people felt the same as me”
- Session 2 - “Encouraging Children To Be Positive About Learning”
37.5% of families rated this session as “good”; 37.5% of families rated this session as “OK”; 25% of families rated this session as “poor”
Comments: “Know a bit more about comp....good advice and talking about how to be positive.... Good to learn how to use more positive words instead of criticising to encourage a better parent/child relationship...could have been more adapted for the children’s session....not much for the children to do”
- Session 3 - “Homework And Exams”
12% of families rated this session as “very good”; 75% of families rated this session as “good”; 12% of families rated this session as “OK”
Comments: “Very good advice, learnt a lot today...very informative and I liked the top tips for kids and parents....was able to find out important questions about homework”
- Session 4 - “Feelings Towards School”
12.5% of families rated this session as “very good”; 50% of families rated this session as “good”; 37.5% of families rated this session as “OK”
Comments: “I know more about comp....Good advice given again, can’t wait for next week....Good for my son to talk about and write down his feelings.... Very good”

- Session 5 - "Safe And Effective Use of ICT – E-safety"
100% of families rated this session as "good" or "very good"
Comments: "Fantastic session, great to learn about safety online....excellent online safety lesson very much enjoyed....useful information"
- Session 6 - "Starting A New School"
100% of families rated this session as "good" or "very good"
Comments: "Good to ask questions about the school and have a tour....excellent visit of the school and booklet given was useful...very good, would rather have more sessions in St Martins....enjoyable and useful information"
- Overview of 6 week Project
87.5% of families rated project as "very good"; 14.2% of families rated project as "good"

Coping with Comp
Evaluation Comments from Parents

“Very good for anxious parents. Please roll out every year!!”

“Excellent course”

“Feel so much better about my child going to comprehensive school”

“Very helpful even for a mum that’s had older children in comprehensive school”

“Thank you”

“I feel better about the transition”

“I have enrolled on a St James Maths course to further support my child when she goes to comp. I learnt the most in St Martins School. I thoroughly enjoyed this project I hope it rolls out to more parents”

“I wish it was longer!!”

“This was a brilliant idea I feel much more confident! I’ve signed up for a St James Maths course to improve my maths so I can help my daughter in comp”

“I’ve signed up for a maths course with St James to help support my daughter”

Evaluation Comments from Children

“It helped me raise my confidence about going to comp”

“I learnt more stuff about comp”

“The school was great”

“Other people should definitely try this project out”

“It helped me more”

“I think other people should have a go”

“It was fun”

Programme Title: Coping with Comp						
Venues: Weeks 1-4: Integrated Children's Centre (ICC), St James' Primary School. Weeks 5-6 St Martin's School, Hillside, Caerphilly, CF83 1UW						
Timings: Parents 1-3pm Pupils: 2-3pm						
Anticipated numbers: Parents: 10 Pupils: 10						
Program objectives: To support transition from primary to secondary education To equip families with tips and techniques for coping with comprehensive school To build confidence in families to support their child's education						
Session	1	2	3	4	5	6
Date	2 nd March	9 th March	16 th March	23 rd March	30 th March	6 th April
Venue	ICC	ICC	ICC	ICC	St Martin's	St Martin's
Area of Focus:	Helping Children Learn at Home: To explore how parents can actively support children to learn	More ideas to help children learn at home: To encourage children to be positive about learning	Homework and exams: To explore concerns about homework and exams and how to overcome blocks	Parents and Schools: To explore parents' and children's feelings about school and how parents can link constructively with school	To explore safe and effective use of computers – e-safety	Starting a new school
Parent Session outline & activities	A very soft session which begins with ice breakers & group ground rules - creating a safe learning environment	3Ps: Positive, Persistent and Problem Solving A series of group exercises around statements. For example, turning 'You	Getting into routines, revision planning, homework diaries, encouragement and reminders: Activities based around creating an appropriate space; what	Memories of school as a child and relationships with school as a parent: Discussion: Do they know how their child is feeling	The benefits and risks of being online: The risks of children having free rein on social networks and the implication	Final session outline to be provided by St Martin's but may include: Standards Continuation of work

	<p>Hope, Fears & Expectations – A discussion based activity to identify what they would like to get out of the programme (this will help facilitators to tailor future sessions)</p> <p>A former parent from St James' primary will be invited to join the group to share her experience of transition</p>	<p>can't go out until you've finished your homework' into a positive statement which leads into discussion around the feelings created from these statements. The session will help parents recognise concerns and negative feelings and give them tips on how to help</p>	<p>can they do if they don't understand the homework.</p> <p>The session will close with a look at a poster/ flyer with information on St Martin's 'Show My Homework' software.</p> <p>Homework:</p> <p>To chat with your child about their feelings about going to comp</p>	<p>about going to comp?</p> <p>Activity to think about what they can say and do to help with their child's feelings and or any concerns they may have around transition</p>	<p>s of their actions.</p> <p>This session will focus on getting parents involved in the conversation and making them aware so that they can support safe use</p>	<p>Explaining how classes are structured</p> <p>Facilities and resources</p> <p>Structure of the school day – 'day in the life of a Year 7' touring the school</p>
Parent session led by:	Flying Start	Flying Start	Flying Start	Flying Start	St Martin's	St Martin's
Resources	Teas, Coffees & Biscuits		St Martin's 'Show My Homework Flyer			
Family Session outline and activities	<p>A continuation of the activity above followed by an activity to identify the differences between the two</p>	<p>How do you learn, why do you learn and share positive experiences :</p> <p>Opportunities and</p>	<p>'Tacking the homework'</p> <p>A scenario based task (provided by St Martin's) where groups will be challenged to make a plan</p>	<p>St Martin's – Everything you need to know:</p> <p>Groups will be given some time to think about questions</p>	<p>A lighter session than the one above for parents looking at the benefits of being online but also looking at some case</p>	<p>Final session outline to be provided by St Martin's but may include:</p> <p>What are you most</p>

	types of school. What are you looking forward to most?	aspirations – why is it a good thing to learn? Where can it take you? Finding things hard is ok and it's important to share. Activities may include the 'Worry box' and a P4C task around 'Silly Billy' by Anthony Browne	to complete various homeworks that have been set What's the plan? How can we help each other to get it done? How can I help myself?	for St Martin's staff. Q&A with St Martin's staff, answers to the FAQs of new pupils and parents. Final element of session will be giving to reflect and write down any questions they didn't get the chance to ask / prefer not to ask face to face	studies 'what went wrong' to avoid discussions around staying safe. Second half of session: An introduction to 'Show May Homework' and the St Martin's app	excited about? Q&A with former St James pupils (i.e. Year 7&8 pupils) Introducing the Yr 7 Buddy System if that still exists
Family session led by:	Adult Learning Wales	Adult Learning Wales	Adult Learning Wales	Adult Learning Wales	St Martin's	St Martin's
Resources	Squash and cake/ biscuits		St Martin's 'Top 10 Tips for Homework' flyer			

Appendix 5

Monkton Priory School: Case Study

The Launch adult learning project was developed by the Headteacher of Monkton Priory Community Primary School, Shelley Morris in September 2012, it evolved from the previous “Springboard” project based in the school and delivered by the local authority.

A Launch Learning Coordinator was appointed in September 2012; the mission statement;

‘Launch learning provides adult education in the community for the community. Accredited and non-accredited courses are available and designed to remove barriers so that people in the community gain the confidence and skills to find employment.’

Why:

- Around 56% of children have been entitled to free school meals
- 40% of children have additional learning needs
- There are two additional learning needs units
- 30% of children are Gypsy/Traveller
- Gypsy Traveller unit for secondary pupils and 20 children are in the Priory Project

Research shows the impact of deprivation on children include: underachievement, lack of self-esteem and lack of aspiration. Despite various interventions in school, some children failed to reach their full potential. The school took the decision that more could be done to reach out to parents and the wider community to develop their skills and aspirations.

Launch consulted parents and the community to find out what courses they wanted and reviewed local employers and their requirements. One of the largest employers locally is Valero Oil Refinery who require a Site Safety Card from all job applicants (CCNSG card), costing around £160. This requirement can make a big impact if claiming benefits, and this is one of the first courses Launch offered.

Launch also wanted to offer progression to students, and feedback reflected that this was also something the community wanted. Positive partnership has been central to the development of the project and a hugely successful partnership with the University of Wales Trinity St David (UWTSD) has emerged. Since 2012 students can study for a Foundation degree in Inclusive Education delivered through outreach

at Monkton School. This was so successful that students can now study for an additional year and gain a BA Degree in Inclusive Education.

One of the main barriers to learning for our students was child care. Launch now offer a free crèche with every course. This highlighted a shortage of quality crèche workers available. Launch applied to become a learning centre with Open Awards which enabled them to write and deliver accredited courses, tailor made for the community's needs. There were no crèche worker courses available in the UK apart from one provider in Scotland. The Launch Adult Learning co-ordinator gained the qualifications required to become a tutor and wrote an accredited crèche worker course, which included the Local Authorities safeguarding qualification. The Headteacher has also qualified to be the Internal Verifier for Open Awards, ensuring quality of courses.

Impact

Evidence shows that over 70% of participants found employment as a direct result of this course, as the card is recognised nationally and lasts for 3 years, participants can also apply for jobs anywhere in the UK. Due to the impact on employment, Launch try to offer one of these courses as a minimum every term.

Launch now have 4-year groups running in the evenings and over 200 students studying in the evenings for a Foundation Degree and over 74 students gaining a full BA degree since 2012.

7 Learning Support Assistants working in the school are now graduates and this has made a massive impact up skilling the workforce of the school. The Degree programme has been so successful Launch were approached at the end of 2016 by UWTSD who want to offer another BA Degree programme in Youth and Community Work at Monkton School

Launch have now delivered 5 Crèche Worker courses since September 2016 and have been able to build a pool of qualified crèche workers. This has led directly to 5 participants gaining crèche work employment including employment with other partner organisations.

One of the participants is an adult Gypsy/Traveller man who could not write his name or read at all. After 121 sessions since September he announced last week that he has been reading his 3 and 7 year old children bedtime stories. His employer is also considering promotion for him.

Data from the school is illustrating how Launch has positively impacted both attendance and attainment and closed the gap between children with Free School Meals and those without.



Attendance

2010/2011	2012/2013	2014/2015	2016/2017
91.9%	91.9%	95.4%	94.2%

	2013	2016
Actual	91.9%	95.2%
Non FSM	92.4%	95.3%
FSM	89.6%	95.1%



The pupil deprivation grant was introduced to provide financial support to help tackle the effects of poverty on attainment.

	2010		2017	
	FSM	N FSM	FSM	N FSM
CSI	22.2%	66.7%	73%	69%
English	22.2%	80%	73%	69%
Maths	22.2%	73.3%	73%	69%
Science	44.4%	86.7%	73%	69%



HMI reported on the School's activities in 2016:

Learning environment: Excellent

Monkton Priory is an extremely inclusive, caring and welcoming environment for pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. The school is a beacon for lifelong learning in the community. For example, the partnership work that has enabled parents, staff and other members of the community to develop new skills and qualifications at the school is a significant strength. Through this work, the school has been innovative in establishing outstanding links with the Gypsy and Traveller community. The wide range of courses, including basic skills courses for parents, GCSE and a degree course offered at the school has brought the community into the school. This has ensured a vibrant learning environment that provides high aspirations for all and has provided parents and carers with the skills to help their children.

A significant strength of the school is the partnership with parents and the wider community. The school has established its provision for developing adult education and lifelong learning superbly over a number of years. The Launch project is an innovative approach to providing adult education for parents, staff and the wider community. Through the project, the school offers an exceptional range of courses from developing basic skills to a foundation degree offered in partnership with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. As a result, many parents and staff have gained qualifications. This work is having a very positive effect on pupils, for example improving their attitudes to learning and attendance. The school has shared its work on adult education and community cohesion successfully locally and nationally.

(Estyn, April 2016)

Learner: Lisa Wilson

"I am a lone parent to eight children aged between 4 years and 24 years. I am also a Grandmother to three children. All my children have been or still are at Monkton CP School. Two years ago, I was contacted by the adult learning coordinator for Launch and the Head Teacher both at Monkton School, they advised me to start a foundation degree at the school that was being provided by University of Wales Trinity Saint David. I could not even turn on a computer but Kellie booked me on a First Steps course (paid for by Monkton CP School). The computer course is provided at the school by Learning Pembrokeshire. I took the follow up course as well to improve my IT skills. I have not studied since leaving school but felt it was time that I did something for myself and to be a positive role model to my children and grandchildren. My confidence was quite low but I was persuaded by Kellie and Shelley (Head teacher). Launch also provided a crèche so there were no excuses for me not to give it a go. I have really enjoyed the course and I have received

excellent marks so far and I have now graduated with a 2:1. UWTSD and especially Jean Williams have been fantastic support and I was diagnosed with Dyslexia and ADHD by college staff. Because of my diagnosis, I have been provided with equipment to help with my disability. After I graduate from the foundation degree, I feel that I am now capable to study for the full BA hons degree next year. My computer skills have increased and so has my confidence. With my new-found confidence, I decided it was also time to learn to drive. Launch and Monkton CP School helped and provided me with the revision disk and the computer room to study for the theory side of the test. I passed and this has given me more freedom and independence. I volunteered to be a mentor for people with drug and alcohol problems and I passed many courses as a support worker. I now also volunteer three days at Monkton School as a Teaching Assistant in order to help with my degree course. I have now applied to be a parent governor, as I feel confident enough to give my voice on behalf of all the parents here at Monkton School. My life has changed for the better and I would like to give special thanks to all at Launch and University of Wales Trinity St David for having the confidence in me and the belief that I can reach my full potential and literally change my life.”