

2005—2006

**LEA REVIEW OF
14-19 PATHWAYS**



CONTENTS

Introduction

Blaengwawr Comprehensive School – Appropriate Curriculum	Pages 1 - 3
Mountain Ash Comprehensive School – BTEC Construction	Pages 4 - 6
Mountain Ash Comprehensive School – Horticulture	Pages 7 – 10
Porth County Community School – NVQ Teaching Assistants	Pages 11 –15
Ysgol Gyfun Rhydfelen – XL network Princes Trust	Pages 16 – 18
Fairbridge Cymru	Pages 19 – 22
Coed Y Lan Comprehensive School – Construction	Pages 23 – 27
Newman R C Comprehensive School – Care	Pages 28 –30

INTRODUCTION

Building upon the **2004-2005 LEA Review of Learning Pathways** the 14-19 Network commissioned Sian Nicholas, the 14-19 Adviser for Vocational and Continuing Education at ESIS, to carry out further reviews on the emerging pathways within our secondary schools.

In light of the Learning Pathways Guidance document schools are continuing to develop good partnership arrangements with the local college, with local employers and with training providers in order to 'widen participation' and to give learners in key stage 4 and post 16 an extended 'option menu.'

Within the document you will learn more about the successful 'Appropriate Curriculum' being delivered in Blaengwawr. The range of subjects at Mountain Ash Comprehensive School and Porth Community School which serve the 'Services to People' domain. The impact the Princes' Trust is having on the individual learners at Ysgol Gyfun Rhydfelen and how the school is incorporating formal qualifications within this non-formal route of learning. In addition, some schools in the borough have utilised the service of Fairbridge and have been impressed with the way that some of their disengaged young people have become 'engaged' with learning following a Fairbridge intervention programme.

In addition you will learn more about two projects which emerged as a direct result of the Common Investment Fund from ELWa. Two such projects reviewed by ESIS were the Construction course at Coedylan and the Care course at Cardinal Newman both of which were supported by Coleg Morgannwg. Students from the three neighbouring schools came together in one base school to be taught a new vocational area on the curriculum.

Some of the recommendations within this report indicate that there still remain some teething problems. However, we are confident as a borough that we are moving forward in 'extending opportunities' through an option menu that meets the demands of tomorrow.

May I take this opportunity to thank ESIS, Head teachers, staff and students for their contribution to this new Review of 14-19 Learning Pathways in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Gareth Rees
School Improvement Officer
Rhondda Cynon Taf

January 2006

Blaengwawr Comprehensive School

Agreed focus:

To review the Appropriate Curriculum in Key Stage 4

Background:

During the academic year of 2003 – 2004 it became apparent to the Senior Management team that the key stage 4 option menu would not be appropriate for a group of twelve students. Their general behaviour pattern as well as specific incidents during Key Stage 3 had been carefully monitored through the school's 'Sleuth' behaviour programme and an 'Appropriate curriculum' was devised. Such a programme would ensure that the students worked towards GCSE qualifications in the core subjects and followed the statutory requirement for Welsh, Religious Education, Physical Education and PSE. In addition the students would follow a kinaesthetic craft programme with three members of staff offering various skills. One of these teachers was also given the responsibility to monitor and support the students during their two-day work experience. Such has been the support of this member of staff to the students in their overall development that she could be viewed as a Learning Coach and with further training she could advise the students concerning their future pathway.

Work experience placements:

The allocation of the two-day work experience has been carefully structured by a placement officer from Careers Wales and the Deputy Head teacher. This has the aim of providing the students with a range of taster experiences within placements which meet their aspirations. Placements vary from work experience at a local Primary School to small businesses such as upholstery, landscaping and garages and from larger institutions such as the Local Leisure Centre to 'in house' work experience assisting the Science and Design and Technology departments in school as technicians. Careers Wales ensure that all employers engaged in this programme meet recommended health and safety guidelines.

The work placements are structured so that they take place at the end of the week on a Thursday and Friday and are used as an incentive for the students during their three days at school. Such has been the success of the scheme that 'Sleuth' referrals have been dramatically reduced and students are working more effectively in their core and statutory subjects at the beginning of the week. Another incentive for three of the students has come in the form of offers of apprenticeship training when they leave school in addition to a Saturday job.

As well as discussing the scheme with the teacher in charge it was decided that a visit to two of the placements would be arranged. The following observations were made during these visits.

Work experience observations:

Student A - working in a local garage

Although student A had the opportunity to experience a number of different work placements he decided from the outset to spend all his time in a local garage where the owner knew his grandfather. Although this was a tenuous link it was enough to establish a close working relationship between the garage owner and the student. This relationship has developed sufficiently for the owner to offer the student a mechanic apprenticeship as soon as he leaves school.

According to student A,

'I love it here. I have learnt so much since starting here. My mother brings me here in the car every Thursday and Friday and I even help out on a Saturday. I don't mind the hours because I'm doing something that I've always wanted to do. I'm even working better in school and last week I made sure that my English course work was in on time.'

The owner also remarked that he felt that the programme had definite advantages and that having somebody working with him to learn the trade was definitely rewarding.



Student B - working in a local Sports Shop having spent sometime in the local Leisure Centre.

The variety of experiences within both settings is having a positive effect on the student. He is responsible for his own travel arrangements and thus far he has made sure he arrives on time and carries out the responsibilities given to him during his placement. Without a doubt student B feels that the provision of a two-day placement has made him more focused in school, especially as he strives to overcome difficulties with his basic skills.



Recommendations for further development:

- Celebrate the fact that the Appropriate Curriculum for 2004 – 2006 is having a marked effect on the individuals. Attendance figures have improved by an average of 7% this academic year, behaviour in school has also improved and students are learning that they must take responsibility for their actions. Students are making more of an effort in their academic subjects and responding well to their personal mentor/ learning coach.
- Celebrate the fact that three students have received the opportunity to follow an apprenticeship course in the future and thus ensuring that they are on the appropriate pathway to meet their career aspirations
- Celebrate the fact that the school is responding to the Appropriate Curriculum according to need. Present 'Sleuth' data reveals that there will be no demand for the programme with the present year 9 students when they enter key stage 4 in September 2005.
- Celebrate the fact that the designated team of staff allocated to the Appropriate Curriculum are fully committed to the success of this programme and are experiencing a better response to their subjects by the students.
- Celebrate the fact that the school has seen the need to allocate one member of staff from the team to monitor the students' progress in school as well as health and safety issues that might arise during work experience. Her genuine concern for the student's welfare is having a positive effect on the programme.
- Consider refining this three way programme between the school, employers and Careers Wales by including the following;
 - A work related qualification, which accredits the work, carried out during the work placements.
 - Photographic evidence and witness statements from the employers to include in the students Progress File.
 - All the above could contribute as evidence towards the wider key skill of 'Improving own Learning and Performance.'
- Refine the self-evaluation documentation of the programme so that it includes feedback from employers, parents and pupils. Such feedback will be invaluable for the current programme and future initiatives.

Mountain Ash Comprehensive School

BTEC Construction

Agreed focus:

To review the introduction of the BTEC First Construction Award in Key Stage 4.

Background:

To a school that has offered a range of GNVQ courses at Key Stage 4 and post 16 the announcement that the GNVQ courses were going to be phased out by 2007 meant that a replacement suite of courses was needed to fill the gap.

The BTEC First suite of qualifications met this need especially as they were '*designed to provide specialist work related qualifications in a range of sectors.*'

The vocational sectors chosen at Mountain Ash Comprehensive in Key Stage 4 are:

BTEC First Diploma in Art and Design.
BTEC First Diploma in Engineering and Manufacturing.
BTEC First Diploma in Construction.
BTEC First in Public Services.

In addition the school have introduced the Diploma in Digital Applications (DiDA).

The school aim is to ensure that each student opting for the BTEC First qualification works towards the **Diploma** award which is equivalent to 4 GCSEs grade A*- C. This award, taught within 11 hours a fortnight gives the students a **specialist** qualification that focuses on particular aspects of employment within the sector. However, if students only achieve 3 units they can claim the BTEC First **Certificate** which is equivalent to two GCSEs grade A*-C and which acts as an **introductory** vocational qualification.

For the purpose of this review the BTEC First Construction Award was observed.

The Qualification:

In order to achieve the BTEC First Diploma the students must cover the three core units:

Unit 1: Introduction to the Construction Industry.
Unit 2: Investigating Health, Safety and Welfare.
Unit 3: Construction Science and Mathematics.

and three specialist units selected by the school to reflect the staff expertise:

Unit 7: Investigating Carpentry and Joinery.
Unit 10: Investigating Trowel Operations.
Unit 13: Investigating Painting and Decorating.

Pathway:

The aim of the course at Key stage 4 is to lay a foundation for the construction industry as well as allowing students within the consortium arrangements in the Cynon valley to specialise in their chosen area and move on to the local, higher education college for the higher level skills.

Students:

Fifty-one students, making a third of the year 10 students, have opted for the award in key stage 4. This is made up of forty-three boys and eight girls. Due to the large numbers and the selection of other key stage 4 option choices three groups have been formed which naturally place the students according to ability levels:

Group 1 - where the majority of students are from the upper band (5 girls included).

Group 2 - an all boys group from the middle band.

Group 3 - a lower ability group who are thriving on the practical aspect of the course.

Two boys from group 2 made the following comment:

'I'd like to be a bricklayer when I leave school and this course is giving me a good start.'

'I'm really glad I choose this subject because I'm learning so much.... I like the practical bits most.'

Accommodation:

In order to deliver the qualification the school has invested in the reconstruction of the Careers library and four offices into a construction annex with appropriate workstations for eighteen students. Initial clearing of the annex took place during the summer vacation and the construction of the workstations ready for plastering, painting and decorating has been a joint venture between the students and the staff. By being involved in the construction of their amenities the students have been united in ensuring that they gave each task their best effort. By completing a detail work log and photographic evidence of their activities the students are able to generate evidence towards unit 13 of the award.

Staff profile:

Six members of staff from the Design and Technology department are currently delivering the BTEC first programme:

- The head of department who has the appropriate assessor awards.
- A member of staff who specialises in Graphic and computer design.
- One member of staff who is a qualified engineer.
- A member of staff with thirty years engineering experience plus assessors awards.
- A member of staff with thirty years carpentry experience.
- The department's technician who has the appropriate industry standard. City and Guilds qualifications for Painting and Decorating and thirty years experience in the Painting and decorating field.

Recommendations:

- Celebrate the fact that such large numbers of students have opted for the subject and that a significant number of girls are opting to follow a pathway in Construction.
- Celebrate the fact that the students feel a sense of ownership of the subject as they involve themselves in the reconstruction of accommodation.
- Refine the key skills profile within the scheme of work. At present they are too ad-hoc and do not reflect the specific contribution that the subject is having on the application of key skills within a certain unit of work. For example, the work generated in Unit 13 is an excellent example of application of number and problem solving.
- Seek the support of the awarding body's external verifier (when appointed in February 2006) to ensure that the work generated from students at all levels meets the standards. Refine accordingly, especially if the qualification is too ambitious for the less able.



Mountain Ash Comprehensive School

Horticulture

Agreed focus:

To review the development of Key Start at Mountain Ash Comprehensive School.

Background:

Key Start initially began in 1999 to *'provide an intensive year 11 alternative curriculum programme for a cohort of pre-identified disaffected pupils from the Bryncynon area'*. Funded via Cymorth the Bryncynon Community Revival Strategy delivered its alternative programme at the Abernant centre and the school took responsibility for delivering English and Mathematics. Due to unforeseen circumstances the Abernant centre closed in 2003 and the school and the Bryncynon Community Revival Strategy had to devise an alternative Key Start programme which would endorse their original aims. These aims were to:

- provide support for young people who are at risk of disengaging;
- provide opportunities to promote self-worth and communication skills;
- develop good relationships with the families of the identified young people;
- enable the young people to gain more from their school and training which will help them to make informed choices;
- promote school, community and family partnerships that can respond holistically to a young person's needs.

The main outcome would aim to ensure that students':

- attendance, confidence, self-esteem and social skills improved,
- that they worked towards achieving a GCSE Level 1 / CoE in Maths and English,
- that they engaged themselves in further training and/or employment.

Coinciding with the closure of Abernant the school was approached by a local landscape gardener who was anxious to train young people in Horticulture. He possessed the relevant assessor qualifications and was working towards a PGCE. Such a profile would equip him to deliver and assess the following two level one qualifications;

- City and Guilds Level 1 Horticulture Skills Test – a series of 12 tests designed to explore the student's knowledge and awareness of horticultural practice in a range of areas.
- City and Guilds NVQ Level 1 Horticulture – a qualification that is appropriate for both production and amenity horticulture.

In order to generate the evidence for the portfolio the students would carry out community projects in the feeder schools, the local church and within the school grounds.

For the purpose of this report the implementation of the Horticultural course within the Key Start programme is being reviewed.

First cohort of students' 2003- 2004 (on the new Key Start programme):

Six boys were placed on the Key Start programme in the first year and four achieved the NVQ 1 Horticulture award which is equivalent to 4 GCSE's and the level 1 Horticulture Skills test. In addition to their vocational achievement the students achieved level one GCSE Maths and English qualifications.

Second cohort 2004-2005:

Nineteen students were placed on the programme. Although five left the programme and were referred to the Education Welfare Service, eight achieved one GCSE and five boys achieved two GCSE's in Maths and English and achieved the NVQ level 1 in Horticulture and the Horticulture Skills test level 1.

For the purpose of this review one of the students from this cohort returned to school to be interviewed.

'I left school with some qualifications.... the way I was going in year 10 I didn't think that I would get anything but I really enjoyed the Horticulture and would like to carry this on. I thought I could go to Pencoed college to do another course but its too far away from here and there's no bus, I've tried for a job around here but I didn't get it ... I'm just looking now and Dave is keeping an eye out for me. I wish there was something local for me to do... its boring not doing anything with something that I really enjoy doing.'

The above student's portfolio was scrutinised during the review and the external verifier from Pencoed College praised the exceptionally high quality of evidence generated and collated for the portfolio;

'An excellent portfolio well documented with necessary details and assessment carried out. This is one of the best portfolios submitted this year.'



Third cohort 2005-2006:

Nine boys have been placed on the programme since September 2005 and although they have responded better towards the landscaping element of the course the intention is that they also will work towards the Horticultural qualifications.

In addition to the above the assistant head has introduced other programmes to the Key Start students and has planned the timetable as follows:

Monday	GCSE Maths and English. Princes' Trust Excel. Duke of Edinburgh.
Tuesday	NVQ Horticulture (School and Community Projects).
Wednesday	NVQ Horticulture (School and Community Projects).
Thursday	Work Placements.
Friday	GCSE Maths and English. The Summit Project run by the Education Authority Children and Youth Partnership division.

Youth Worker

In order to support the Key Start students through their programme of study the Bryncynon Strategy via Cymorth funding have employed a full time youth worker. His role is to encourage, support and monitor the progress of each student. His termly reports to the assistant head teacher give an insight to the progress made by each one of the students. The rapport between the students and the youth worker is very good

Recommendations:

- Celebrate the fact that the Mountain Ash Horticultural programme has been recognised as an example of good practice in a nationwide publication by the 'Learning through Landscapes' charity.
- Celebrate the fact that the attitude of a number of students towards learning has been re-kindled by being involved in such practical activities.

- Celebrate the fact that such an excellent rapport has developed between the students and the horticultural tutor as well as the students and the youth worker.
 - Celebrate the fact that the portfolio of evidence generated by the students has been highly praised by the external verifier and the 14-19 ESIS Adviser.
 - The school and the authority need to consider refining the present arrangements in order to capture the interest of the students at an earlier age such as at the end of year 9 as well as ensuring that there is a viable pathway for the students in the locality when they leave school.
 - A natural progression route would be the National Certificate in Horticulture, the NVQ in Amenity Horticulture or alternatively the students could work alongside the RCT Parks and Maintenance department in apprenticeship schemes.
 - Refine and co-ordinate the present timetable especially as there may be some duplication between the work carried out in the Prince's Trust, the Summit Programme and the Duke of Edinburgh.
1. **The Prince's Trust**, which leads to an Asdan Bronze Award,
 2. **The Summit programme** which includes job search, application forms, OCN in drug awareness, first aid and food hygiene certificates.
 3. **The Duke of Edinburgh award** acts as an overarching qualification. Evidence generated from one course could support another.
 - The school should consider allocating more time towards building a portfolio for the NVQ which generates a formal qualification.
 - The school needs to improve the use of the Progress File / Careers Wales on line and the RCT Record of Achievement folder especially when presenting themselves to future employers.
 - Although the Careers Wales placement officer checks all the Key start placements, the school should ensure that **extended work placements** meet the relevant protocol.

Porth County Community School

Agreed focus:

To review the development of a level 2 NVQ Teaching Assistants qualification for post 16 students in partnership with Ysgol Hen Felin Training Centre.

Background:

A significant number of students who had successfully achieved the Intermediate Health and Social Care course at key stage 4 returned to year 12 to pursue the advanced level qualification. However, it soon became apparent that the advanced programme was too academic and did not meet the students' more practical capabilities in caring for others. In the spirit of the Learning Pathways Guidance document the school decided to address element two ('Wider Choice and Flexibility') by working in partnership with Ysgol Hen Felin Training Centre (Special Needs School) and offer the students an alternative NVQ care programme. Such a programme would meet the needs of the learner and act as a 'springboard' to further qualifications within the Care sector.

Qualification:

The qualification selected by the school and the training centre was an NVQ 2 for Teaching Assistants (equivalent to 4 GCSE grades A* - C).

Three placements are allocated to the students during the programme and monitoring and assessment visits ensure that the students work towards the following four mandatory units: -

- Unit 2:1 Help with classroom resources and records.
- Unit 2:2 Help with the care and support of pupils.
- Unit 2:3 Provide support for learning activities.
- Unit 2:4 Provide effective support for your colleagues.

Candidates must also complete three of the following optional units:

- Unit 2:5 Supporting literacy and numeracy activities in the classroom.
- Unit 3:1 Contribute to the management of pupil behaviour.
- Unit 3:10 Support the maintenance of pupil safety and security.
- Unit 3:11 Contribute to the health and well being of pupils.
- Unit 3:17 Support the use of ICT in the classroom.

Progression:

In order to ensure a progression route within the locality Porth County Community School and Ysgol Hen Felin Training Centre have secured funding from ELWa to run an NVQ 3 Teaching Assistants course in the school on a Monday evening. Similarly, Ysgol Hen Felin run their own NVQ 3 programme for their staff during in-house INSET, and during the evenings for staff from other schools. Teaching assistants in post who aim to work towards their level 4 HLTA qualification are able to receive their training via ESIS.

Programme Co-ordinator:

The programme co-ordinator / assessor from Ysgol Hen Felin is a local person who has proved that ELWa's statement 'make learning work for you' is true of her career pathway thus far. Leaving school with a handful of qualifications in various subjects she went on to train as an NNEB in Bridgend College. From being a nanny and further supply work in RCT she received a permanent post at Ysgol Hen Felin. Since her appointment she has gone from strength to strength and is currently responsible, with another colleague, for the management of the Training Centre which currently trains a 170 NVQ 2 and 3 candidates. In addition to this she has achieved the necessary assessor awards (D32, D33 and D34), and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education as well as currently working towards achieving a BA degree in Post Compulsory Education and Teaching.

Without a doubt the Programme Co-ordinator's learning pathway has been a means of inspiring the Porth County students and the following comment sums up their appreciation for their tutor.

'Jo is lovely, she always makes sure that we understand exactly what we are doing so that we don't make a mistake'

'She is so organised'.

One past pupil made the following remark:

'She is showing us through her example what can be achieved when you really set your mind to it.... I'm even planning my future courses now and I don't think I'd be doing this if I had not succeeded so well in my NVQ. My NVQ 3 training starts tomorrow.'

First cohort of students 2004 - 2005:

Fourteen students made up of two boys and twelve girls opted for the course with each having an average of four level 2 GCSE qualifications. Having achieved the the NVQ Teaching Assistants qualification two of the girls secured a full time position as Teaching Assistants in Ysgol Hen Felin and one secured a post in the local hospital. Two returned to school to further enhance their ICT skills and work towards the Intermediate Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification. As the students are 18 years old they are periodically used in the Special Needs department as supply Teaching Assistants.

During the review two of the past students currently employed at Ysgol Hen Felin returned to school to give their views on the Teaching Assistants' programme within the school.



'I came back to the sixth form to follow the Advanced Health and Social Care course. Within no time at all I was getting so stressed with the course, I felt that it was so unrelated to what I saw myself doing within Care. Now that I look back at my GCSE results I can see that I did well in the practical subjects like Physical Education, Drama and Music but did not do so well in the other subjects.

One of the boys on the course told me about this new course and I decided I'd give it a go. Although I'd always said that I would never work in a Special School I agreed to do my last placement at Ysgol Hen Felin ... that's the best thing I did because you can't keep me away from there now. After the course finished I was offered a job there and now I'm a Teaching Assistant in the Learning Support Unit with eight pupils between the ages of six and twelve. One thing I do know is that A' levels and going to college is not for everyone and that this course was just up my street.' (Student A)

'I got a pass for my Intermediate Health and Social Care course but did not do so well in my other subjects. I decided to leave school as there was nothing for me in the sixth form. I was home one day when Mr Griffiths phoned and said that there was a new course starting at school and was I interested. I came back and that's the best thing I did. I got my NVQ2, and then in the summer I got a job as a teaching assistant at Ysgol Hen Felin I can't believe it, it's brilliant and I can't thank Jo and Mr Griffiths enough.' (Student B)

Second cohort.

At present there are 10 girls following the course, four of whom achieved an Intermediate Health and Social Care qualification at Key stage 4. Although the number of students is lower than last year the assistant head of school anticipates that the number will increase if the monthly post 16 monitoring reveals that there are other students finding the A ' level route challenging.

All the students agreed that the course had given them,

- a sense of purpose and a clear career pathway,
- confidence within the work place,
- a new challenge.

The following remark was made by one of the new students

'If this course was not on offer in school I would have left school and I'd be doing nothing now. I feel a different person doing this course and the T- shirt makes me feel professional and good about myself'



The first and second cohort wear a distinctive T-shirt with the partnership logo embroidered on the front as a means of recognition in the school and during their work placement. Yellow was the chosen colour for the first cohort and pink is the chosen colour for the second. All students were in agreement that the T-shirts made them feel as if they counted and had been a means of advertising the course to others in the school.

Course structure:

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Work experience in local infants/primary schools.

Thursday morning.

Direct teaching and learning session with the Programme co-ordinator.

Thursday afternoon and Friday.

Portfolio building.

At the end of each half term the deputy head gives each student an interview to review progress and set targets.

Recommendations:

- Celebrate the fact that a new learning pathway has been established which meets the needs and aspirations of post 16 students.
- Celebrate the fact that a three fold partnership has been developed between the school, the training provider and the local infant / primary schools.
- Celebrate the fact that the standard of portfolio evidence produced by the first cohort of students reflected the organisational and motivational skills of the assessor and the determination of the students to display their understanding of the given criteria.
- Refine the course structure on a Thursday afternoon and a Friday in order to incorporate the Key Skills. At present the tutorial sessions with the assistant head could generate evidence towards the key skill 'Improving own learning and performance'. By working on option 3:17 the students could also generate evidence towards the ICT Key skill.
- Improve the use of the Progress File / Careers Wales on line and the RCT Record of Achievement folder especially when presenting themselves to future employers.
- Seek the support of Careers Wales to ensure that health and safety requirements are covered during the extended work placement.
- Seek the support of the 14-19 Adviser to annually review the programme so that it forms part of the whole school review and development programme.
- Ensure that final accreditation is awarded to students when they are 18 years old.

Ysgol Gyfun Rhydfelen

Agreed focus:

To review the XI network Prince's Trust in key stage 4

'xl is a UK-wide programme, which actively encourages young people to make the most of their time at school by boosting levels of motivation and encouraging them to gain practical skills for a better future.'

'The award is designed to support disengaged young people to:

- to demonstrate, understand and develop their ability to set and meet short term targets,
- to work effectively with others,
- to problem solve.'

Background

Ysgol Gyfun Rhydfelen has been operating the xl network programme since the initial 2001 pilot was launched in RCT. By establishing such a programme the school was addressing a particular group of students who were disengaged and disinterested with the formal pathway offered at the school. Attempts were made with the first cohort to provide additional vocational experiences at the nearby college but unfortunately the 'Gwefr Gwaith' package did not meet the needs of the 14-16 learners and was abandoned after the second year.

During 2003 the school decided to further enhance the xl network programme by placing it under the 'Services to People' domain and giving overall responsibility of the course to the vocational co-ordinator. Working with a team of three dedicated teachers (one being the SENCO and another an assistant head) the team has incorporated a range of formal, non-formal and informal experiences within the programme. All activities are carefully logged in specific workbooks for each learner and portfolio evidence indicates that each student takes particular pride in their own personal logbooks, which are endorsed with photographic evidence. Such is the success of the current programme that one student from year 11 who has specific learning difficulties made the following remark during the review.

'The course is teaching me about life, how to help myself and how to work in a team. This is my favourite subject, learning is fun, the best part of the course was going away to Cwrt y Cadno'

At the beginning of year 11 the xl staff took the students down to Cwrt y Cadno in West Wales for a three-day excursion. Here they worked as a team to prepare their own food and plan activities. Staff commitment to the course along with 'praise cards' for good behaviour has added a new dimension to the programme and previously disengaged students are engaged in completing the various awards associated with this programme.

Course development and achievement since 2001

2001 - 2003	1 st cohort	17 students (12 boys, 5 girls)	10 achieved Asdan xl bronze award.
2002 - 2004	2 nd cohort	17 students (8 boys, 9 girls)	14 achieved Asdan xl bronze award.
2003 - 2005	3 rd cohort	16 students (10 boys, 6 girls)	16 achieved Asdan xl bronze award in year 10. Working towards Asdan xl silver and Communication level 1 award in year 11. <u>Additional accreditation.</u> St John's Breath of Life Award. Food Hygiene Certificate.
2004 - 2006	4 th cohort	17 students (12 girls, 5 boys)	Working towards the same awards as cohort 3

In order to deliver the XL bronze and silver award the school are delivering the following units and incorporating various activities as evidence for the award.

Unit	Unit title	Additional generated evidence
2.1 Bronze	Working with others and personal skills.	St John First Aid award 'Breath of Life'.
2.5 Bronze	Enterprise and Entrepreneurship.	Making badges
2.6 Bronze	Preparing for work.	Year 10 statutory work experience.
2.3 Silver	Community based project.	Clearing the neighbourhood
2.2 Silver	Citizenship and community awareness.	
2.4 Silver	Residential activity.	Cwrt y Cadno – residential experience

Recommendations for further development:

Celebrate the fact that the xl network programme is going from strength to strength and is a viable option in key stage 4 and managed within the 'Services to People' domain.

Celebrate the fact that the Rhydfelen xl network programme incorporates a formal, non-formal and informal accreditation, which engages the learner.

Formal	Key Skills
Non Formal	xl Bronze award. XI Silver award. First aid award. Food Hygiene Certificate.
Informal	Work experience. Residential experience. Community activities.

Seek to refine the collation of achievements at the end of key stage 4 so that they are incorporated within the RCT Record of Achievement and effectively used as a life long learning tool.

Refine the self-evaluation documentation for the programme in order to contribute to the whole school self evaluation dimension.

Seek the support of GTCW or the Prince's Trust to investigate the impact such a programme is having on the learner in other areas of the school e.g. attendance, behaviour, motivation.

FAIRBRIDGE

Agreed focus:

To review the work of Fairbridge in the Valleys.

Background information:

Fairbridge Cymru is the Welsh arm of a UK wide charity whose goal is **‘to build self-belief and motivation in the most challenging young people, offering them the foundations for a life full of choices and opportunity.’** Fairbridge aims to achieve this goal through the voluntary participation of individuals. Fifteen teams across the UK work with 13 -25 year olds from the most marginalised, disaffected and vulnerable groups in society, deemed to be ‘at risk’ according to behavioural indicators and personal circumstances.

In Wales the charity is based in three areas. Cardiff is the home of the headquarters known as **Fairbridge De Cymru** whilst **Fairbridge Swansea** is located in the city of the same name. A further centre has been established in Porth known as **Fairbridge in the Valleys** and acts as a satellite centre for the Cardiff office.

Fairbridge in the Valleys

Since June 2004 Fairbridge in the Valleys has worked with approximately 70 young people of compulsory school age from RCT. The vast majority have been from Aberdare Girls and Ferndale Community School. Referrals have also come via the detached youth team from Bryncelynnog Community School, Mountain Ash Comprehensive, Tonyrefail and Ysgol Gyfun Cymer. This work was conducted through the Cardiff office via their mobile unit.

Having secured funding from the European Social Fund and the Coalfields Regeneration Trust it was decided that RCT young people between the ages of 13-25 should access their courses through a local centre. As a result **Fairbridge in the Valleys** was established at 6 Station Rd, Porth and was officially opened on the 3rd June 2005. The funding secured, aims to ensure that vulnerable young people from the RCT area can access support free of charge and establish **‘foundations for a life full of choices and opportunity.’**

Staffing at the centre:

At present three full time staff who are all trained youth workers manage the centre.

The staff profile is made up of:

- **The project manager** (a trained teacher) has the responsibility to manage the day to day running of the centre, liaise with referral agencies and run courses.

- **The outreach development worker post 16** who works with local secondary schools, charities and public services to identify young people who are disengaged or at risk of disengagement.
- **A development tutor** who designs and delivers the courses.

Initial target

To support 100 young people between the ages of 13-25 to re-engage in mainstream society.

Working with schools

Although the centre works closely with a number of detached youth workers based in the RCT schools the present drive of the project manager is to introduce herself to curriculum managers from schools. This is done with the aim of asking them to identify students who are non attending or who are on the verge of exclusion from the school. By working in partnership with the school and the young person the aim is to re-engage the individual with education and to give them a fresh start in life.

Fairbridge bi-annual magazine highlights the following case study.

'My teacher referred me to Fairbridge because I was having difficulties at school. I completed loads of different courses and found a real love for outdoor activities. My life would have been very different if I hadn't come to Fairbridge. To have someone believe in you when you are young is the best thing that can happen to you.'

Similarly a student from Aberdare Girls School commenting during the opening ceremony of the Porth centre said that,

'Fairbridge has changed my life... I am now doing better in school than I ever did before and I intend to go on to college and become a youth worker.'

Available Programmes

ACCESS COURSES

With a maximum of 8 young people on the course and a ratio of 1 tutor to 4 young people the centre aims to start with challenging activities that take the young people out of their natural environment and away from peer group pressure. All the activities use Kolb's learning cycle the 'Plan-Do-Review-Apply' system and young people are encouraged to collate their action plans and photographic evidence for their individual portfolio

Under 16 Access course

The under 16 Access course is a new tailor made programme that aims to equip young people with the motivation and skills they need to re-engage in mainstream education and training. The programme runs over a six-week block with the young people attending two days a week initially and then one day until the four-day residential experience in the final week.

During the six week programme the young people will work towards the Fairbridge Access Course

The under 16-access course is accredited by ASDAN and is equivalent to one credit.

Identified young people from Porth County Community School and Tonypany Community College will commence the under 16-access programme in October 2005.

Over 16 Access course

The over 16-access programme run over a five day block and starts with a challenging residential outdoor activities course which involves Team Raft Building, Climbing, Canoeing, Mountain Walks, Cooking and Caving.

Having completed this course the young people achieve a Fairbridge Access Course certificate which is equivalent to 1 ASDAN credit.

Follow On Courses

Once the Access Course is completed the young people can either return to school or take part in the Follow On programme which is centred on work based skills, independent living skills or community and recreation activities. Every programme is tailored to individual needs and can last as long as a young person needs support. Examples of courses running at the Porth centre at present are

- Cooking on a Budget,
- Conservation,
- Sport,
- Information Technology.

If a young person takes part in a Follow on course, they can work towards their ASDAN 'Level Up' award and continue to build units of credit to take back to school or submit finished work through Fairbridge for accreditation.

Follow on courses are open to young people aged 13 – 25 who have completed an Access course and who are still not engaging full time with mainstream education or training.

The Porth Centre usually offers one day per week Follow On and the Cardiff centre traditionally offers four days. Young people are able to access both centres.

There is also opportunity for young people to go on to take part in National Fairbridge courses. For example sailing on the 'Spirit of Fairbridge' or longer residential programmes at The Venture Trust centre in Scotland.

Young people from Aberdare Girls School have taken part in weekly Follow On programmes in both the Porth and Cardiff centres. They have participated in a conservation programme run at the school by Fairbridge staff every fortnight between January and June 2005 and have taken part in a week long residential survival project over the summer holidays.

Young people from Ferndale Community School have taken part in weekly Follow On programmes held at the Porth centre through the link established with the school youth worker. The activities involve a month long gardening project and a sexual health course named SHOUT devised by the centre's staff in response to issues arising from the young people.

During the summer holidays in 2005 young people from Tonyrefail Comprehensive School took part in a music course where they produced their own songs and cd.

Recommendations for further development:

- Celebrate the fact that a youth development programme which works in partnership with referral agencies to re-engage disaffected young people has been established in the valleys and is based in Porth.
- Celebrate the fact that over 70 young people from the borough have participated in the programme and are taking an active part in their own personal development.
- Refine the feedback given to schools. This is particularly true in regard to certificates and accreditation achieved by individuals. Achievements could be included in the young peoples' Rhondda Cynon Taf Record of Achievement Folder and logged onto the Careers Wales on line personal CV programme. Similarly the experiences achieved at Fairbridge could contribute to other programmes of study such as Key Skills, Duke of Edinburgh Award and Prince's Trust.
- Continue to improve self-evaluation documentation in order to inform future planning.
- Continue to build upon the contacts made with the English medium secondary schools and aim to include the Welsh Medium and Special Schools in your future planning.

For further details about Fairbridge in the Valleys contact: Mrs Laura Wilson
Tel 01443 688012 Fitv@fairbridge.org.uk



Coed Y Lan Comprehensive School

Background:

At the end of the summer term when a number of strategic decisions regarding courses and teaching commitments had been finalised schools and colleges in Wales were notified through their LEAs that ELWa had a common investment fund that needed to be allocated to specific pilots to enhance post 16 collaborative working.

One of the pilots to emerge in RCT was a post 16 consortium arrangement for Construction hosted at Coedylan Comprehensive school.

CITB centre approval status had been granted to Coedylan irrespective of the CIF during the summer term of 2005 in preparation for the in house cohort of students who had opted for the CITB Foundation Certificate in Building Craft Occupations course on their return to year 12. External links with Coleg Morgannwg were also in place and they would act as internal verifiers for the school. External verification would be carried out by an appointed CITB examiner.

With internal and external arrangements in place the school were able to offer their facilities to the consortium and deliver two CITB programmes on site. One programme for the cohort of students from Coedylan with nine students and a programme for the consortium group (twelve young men made up of five from Cardinal Newman, three from Coedylan and four from Hawthorn High.) Students in both groups have a low level 1 GCSE profile but are genuinely interested in pursuing a career in the construction industry and are aware that this course will give them the grounding which they need before they decide which pathway within the industry they wish to pursue.

Initial preparations were also in place at Coedylan to deliver a Key Skills suite of qualifications, which were tailored to meet the needs of the construction industry. Discussions took place between the school and the construction department at Coleg Morgannwg and exemplar materials have been given by the college to support the new venture. The deputy head teacher at Coedylan has taken on the role of planning and delivering the Key skills package to the CITB school cohort and is ensuring that the materials are made available to the consortium group.

It is envisaged that the consortium will share their resources with regards to key skills and will in time build up a portfolio of applied exemplar materials within the three consortium sectors that are being piloted during 2005 – 2006. These are Care, Construction and Hairdressing.

Consortium arrangements:

Construction students are transported to the host school by 9.30am every Tuesday and Wednesday. The four hour sessions conclude at 1.30pm and students from neighbouring schools are transported back. Teething transport problems do exist due to traffic congestion and late arrivals and morning sessions are often late starting.

Once the students arrive at the school they are committed to the programme and are 'on task' throughout the session. For some of these students it is the first time that they have felt committed to a programme of study which will up skill them for the future.

The following remarks were made by three of the students:

'I'm doing something that I want to do and it's great. I've learnt a lot in six weeks and I haven't missed a day.'

'I'm learning a trade and that's good I want to be a bricklayer when I leave school. I wish I could have done this course lower down in the school instead of wasting two years of my life....I didn't do very well in my GCSE's because I just wasn't interested.'

'It's great I like the fact that we have all the right gear'

In addition to the two days CITB course at Coedylan the students will be given a work placement opportunity on a Friday. At present only one student has a work placement, which he personally arranged. He says,

'I travel down to Swansea every Friday with a neighbour of mine and work on a building site all day. I'm learning such a lot and can see what Steve has taught in class actually happening on a building site.'

Although the student is gaining valuable work experience the consortium needs to address the health and safety implications of such a placement.

Syllabus and Qualification:

For the initial school Construction pilot the school targeted students who had specific special educational needs or who were disengaged yet wanted to return to year 12 to follow a vocationally related course. The Foundation Certificate award was selected as a 'springboard' to motivate and engage young people on a learning pathway within the Construction industry. Although the award was initially designed by the Construction Industry Training Body as a key stage 4 programme the school adopted the award for post 16 students who had no previous experience within the field and who needed to select their chosen pathway following an introduction to various building craft occupations.

Building upon the success of this year's pilot the school aims to introduce the qualification in key stage 4 and the Intermediate certificate post 16.

The CITB Construction pathway would lead to a natural progression to the local, further education college and ensure that established resources and expertise are utilised to the full.

- Level 1 – Certificate in Building Craft Occupations – key stage 4 + post 16.
- Level 1 - Foundation Construction Award – post 16.
- Level 2 - Intermediate Construction Award – post 16.
- Level 3 - Advanced Construction Award – post 16.

Within the level 1 certificate the students study the following units:

- Handle and Store Materials and Components.
- Remove and Replace Fittings and Fixtures.
- Cut, Lay and Fix Components.
- Mix Materials.
- Apply Finishing Materials.
- Setting Out.

The three construction areas introduced are bricklaying, carpentry and plastering.

Student Profile:

Although the above course is a course that can be introduced at key stage 4 the introduction of such a course for a group of post 16 students who have clearly underachieved in key stage 4 is appropriate. It will act as a vehicle to re-engage them within a field that will interest them and give them an opportunity to select the Construction pathway of their choice. By achieving a recognised level 1 qualification in Construction and level 1 qualifications in two to three Key skills the students will be well equipped to go on to a level 2 and later a level 3 qualification in the future.

Delivery Staff:

As outlined in the LEA review carried out for the 14-19 Network (January 2005) the school has utilised the skills of their site manager who is a builder by trade and currently working towards a PGCE qualification. In addition to the above the site manager gained an A1 assessor qualification through the sponsorship of CITB, which supports the school's CITB approved centre status.

The quality of teaching delivered by the site manager is having a clear and positive effect upon the students' progress. A number of students are indicating that their interest in education has been re-kindled and that they can see career opportunities in the future if they strive to achieve the appropriate qualifications.

Other members of staff are responsible for the delivery of Key Skills, ASDAN or Duke of Edinburgh Award programmes of study within each school.

Accommodation and resources:

As outlined in the review carried out for the 14-19 Network (January 2005) the school has utilised a disused storage area and converted it into a Construction workshop and is currently using this facility with the consortium group. Plans are also underway to build a Construction annex by the end of the Autumn term and reutilise an adjacent Art room in order to enhance the Construction delivery at the school.

In addition to the accommodation the Construction consortium has acquired a range of construction materials as well as health and safety equipment and clothing for all the students. The only requirement for the students is to purchase appropriate footwear and safety gloves.

Recommendations:

- Celebrate the fact that the students are working together in harmony and are supportive of one another in the various activities, which they undertake. The enthusiasm of the site manager for the subject is a major contributory factor to the dynamics of the group.
- Celebrate the fact that the course has managed to re-kindle an enthusiasm towards learning and that previously disengaged students are engaged in a programme of study which will act as a 'springboard' to future learning pathways within the Construction industry.
- Celebrate the fact that the Construction consortium is fully endorsed by the local, further education college and that their role as internal verifiers enhances the partnership which has been forged during the last year.
- Refine transport arrangements so that students are able to start their lessons on time.
- Improve the current provision on Friday when a number of students who had been promised work experience are currently without a placement. Ensure that health and safety issues are in place for the student that has found his own work placement. It is also recommended that each placement should be monitored by the consortium and feedback given to the Construction tutor.

- Continue to work as a consortium to ensure that the key skills taught are applied in a relevant way to the Construction trade. The Key skill model observed at Coedylan was relevant and challenging and equipped the students with the necessary skills that they will need in the work place, e.g. applying number to planning a kitchen for a client.
- Seek the support of Careers Wales on line and the school's Progress File Co-ordinator to ensure that the students' achievements are recorded in their RCT Record of Achievement folder.



Newman R C Comprehensive School

Background:

At the end of the summer term when a number of strategic decisions regarding courses and teaching commitments had been finalised schools and colleges in Wales were notified through their LEAs that ELWa had a common investment fund that needed to be allocated to specific pilots to enhance post 16 collaborative working.

One of the pilots to emerge in RCT was a Care course delivered by Coleg Morgannwg for the three comprehensive schools in the Pontypridd area.

Consortium arrangements:

A part time college lecturer who works three days in a Nursery setting was appointed by Coleg Morgannwg to deliver the consortium Care course two days a week to five girls. The course is held at Cardinal Newman and students from the neighbouring schools are transported to the host school by 9.30am every Tuesday and Wednesday. The four hour sessions conclude at 1.30pm and students from neighbouring schools are transported back to their base schools. On a Friday students are sent out on placement in local nursery or infant settings within the area. One student made the comment,

'The best bit of the course is the placement It's being with the children all day..... I'm always shattered.'

Monitoring procedures are underway to ensure that progress is made during the work placement by each individual student. In addition to the Care programme the students receive a Key skills programme at their base schools and two of the students intend to re-sit their English and Maths GCSE.

Accommodation:

Although the accommodation at present was a disused porter cabin the lecturer and students have made every effort to improve the aesthetic appearance of the room and are busy developing their own displays on various child care themes. However, the accommodation lacks basic resources and materials to aid the delivery of the course.

Syllabus and Qualification.

The Care qualification selected by the college was the CACHE Entry Level 1 or 2 Certificate in Childcare (ELC) as they were under the impression from the consortium that the targeted group of students for the course had Special Educational Needs. However, the students profile below indicates that only one student with such needs returned to year 12 to pursue the course and that the other students had a minimum level 1 GCSE profile. As a result the lecturer has drawn the profile of the students to the attention of the consortium but has not received further instruction with regards to delivery.

School	Student Profile	Career aspirations and placement
Cardinal Newman	Special Needs student who followed a range of Entry level qualifications in key stage 4 and two level 1 qualifications	Nursery Nurse Day Nursery
Cardinal Newman	Achieved a D grade in English and Maths and lower level 1 grades in the other subjects.	Infants teacher Infant department in a school
Hawthorn High	Three level 2 grades and six level 1 GCSE grades.	Nursery Nurse or a Social Worker Reception class
Coedylan	Lower level 1 qualifications.	Undecided Primary school placement
Coedylan	Absent during the review	

Recommendations:

- Celebrate the fact that the students are working together in harmony and are supportive of one another in the various activities which they undertake. The enthusiasm of the lecturer for the subject is a contributory factor to the dynamics of the group.
- As a consortium refine the outcome of the course in order to reflect the academic profile of the students. At present the level of qualification is hindering development and is geared towards students with special circumstances and not post 16 students with on average level 1 GCSE qualifications. The present course is also geared towards parenting skills and does not enhance the experiences that they are having on their work placements.
A CACHE Foundation Award in Caring for Children (level 1) qualification would be more in line with their capabilities and would support their present work placements. However, such a course would need to be delivered with the full co-operation of the consortium and the college and not left to one partner to deliver.

The Foundation award is more suitable for the following reasons:-

- It is an introduction to the Early Years sector for those who may want to work with children.
- It is flexible and can be adapted to fit a centre's own delivery plans.
- It is straightforward and candidate friendly especially with regards to assessment.
- It is equivalent to 5 GCSE grades D-G.

- It is appropriate to progress to Level 2 qualifications such as the Certificate in Childcare and Education or the NVQ in Early Years Care and Education at level 2.

The units within the award are divided as follows:

Unit 1: Personal development (which could be mapped against the key skills delivery and the work placement once a week and the mentoring sessions)

Unit 2: Human growth and development from birth to old age.

Unit 3: Food and nutrition.

Unit 4: Health and safety practices in home group settings.

Unit 5: Care of Children.

Unit 6: Play and Practical activities.

Unit 7: Orientation to work programme (Which would endorse their one day a week work placement)

- If the above qualification is not adopted for the present cohort the college lecturer could deliver some of the Foundation units and other value added qualifications such as the wider key skills of Improving Own Learning and Performance within a care context.
- Improve the monitoring visits which are undertaken in the work place and ensure that progress reports are fed back to the lecturer on a regular basis.
- Improve the channel of communication between the consortium and the college in order to ensure that the course is reviewed and refined accordingly.
- Access funding from the Common Investment Fund to improve the overall environment of the base room and to purchase the necessary resources to enhance learning.

