

School Support & Improvement Education & Lifelong Learning



MARCH 07



Introduction— Steve Lamb Service Director School Support & Improvement

We extend a warm welcome in this edition of our newsletter to Esther Thomas the newly appointed Head of Access and Inclusion. Ceirion Williams has filled that post in a temporary and exemplary way since Barbara Brown Transferred to Children's Services and he has now moved back to his substantive post in Behaviour Support. At the same time we would like to thank Peter Thomas for his good work in temporarily leading the Behaviour Support team. With the full team in place in Access and Inclusion, we can look forward to even more good things from a highly regarded service area.

Special Education Needs

Drama workshops encourage a love of the arts

Drama workshops specially designed for visually impaired young people have been taking place in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

The project was delivered by UCAN productions, a non-profit cooperative set up to ensure visually impaired young people are given access to - and the opportunity to participate in - the arts and is funded by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, Social Risk European fund.

Workshops took place at Tonyrefail Comprehensive School, Blaengwawr Comprehensive School and the Little Theatre in Aberdare.

Visually impaired young people attended the workshops, with their friends, between January and March. The pupils then took to the stage at the Coliseum Theatre in Aberdare on 10th March for a special performance of their work.

UCAN Productions was set up by former 'Hollyoaks' and 'Pobol y Cwm' actor Bernard Latham and his wife Jane.

UCAN receives almost £5000 of Lottery funding from the Arts Council of Wales and was the recent recipient of a 'Children's Champion Award' from National Lottery.

For more information on UCAN productions and their work with young people, please visit their web site at www.ucanproductions.org

Post 16 Pathfinder Seminar

A seminar celebrating consortia progress and highlighting challenges for the future took place at ESIS on 5th March. A panel consisting of Mike Keating, Councillor Mike Forey, Jan Knight, Principal of Coleg Morgannwg and Jane Timmins from the WAG responded to questions during the course of the morning in order to prioritise action for 2007 onwards.

Virtual Learning Pilot

9 schools and Coleg Morgannwg have been involved in producing virtual learning post 16 materials to share with all secondary schools, which will then be placed on the Simply Click VLE. Subjects involved include Physics, Biology, History, Business, Engineering, Electronics and Hairdressing and there will be a seminar at the University on the morning of the 27th March 2007 to highlight this work.

Conferences & Events

Professional Development Seminar (Re-scheduled) Tuesday 27th March
Inside Out, Outside In (Early Years) Wednesday 28th March
Community Focused Schools Conference Thursday 29th March

Contact: School Support & Improvement Teams:

School Improvement
01443 744035/6
(Primary & Secondary)

Access & Inclusion
01443 744015

ESIS
01443 827500

Get Sorted
01443 744386

Governance & Liaison
01443 744180

Music Service
01443 744017

School Improvement Group: Headteacher Reps.

Gill Coleman—
Williamstown Primary
Lisa Bailey—
Trerobart Primary
Andrew Manley—
Hirwaun Primary
Marian Roberts—
Y.G.G. Bodringallt
Pat O'Malley—
Darran Park Primary
David Davies—
Cefn Primary
Gareth Evans—
Dolau Primary
Philippa Thomas—Comin Inf
Carol Parker—Cwmaman Inf

Ann Morris—Y.G. Llanhari
Elaine Keeble—Tonyrefail
David Murphy—
(Deputy) St. Johns CWS
Stephen Parry—Tonypandy
Ian Machin—Aberdare Boys

Music Service

Plans are well under way for the third annual Gwyl Gerdd Ysgolion Rhondda Cynon Taf Primary Music Festival. The festival will run for three days from 11th June and this year will be held at the Coliseum in Aberdare, after two highly successful years at the Parc and Dare in Treorci. The Festival is a non-competitive celebration of Music and Dance in Primary schools, although schools are given feedback on their performances.

Performances in the past have included; recorders, instrumental groups, class singing, choirs, mini-musicals, classroom percussion, harps, African drums, hand-bells, traditional and creative dance.

We welcome performances of all standards. The Festival gives pupils a wonderful opportunity to perform outside of the school environment and to share in each others talents and achievements.

Previous years have seen up to 25 Primary schools take part. We are hopeful that this year's move to the Cynon Valley will encourage new schools to take part as well as those who have taken part before.

Information has gone out to all Primary schools. If you have not received the application form then please contact—Rachel Kilby.

The schools Music Association has for 2 years run a Cathedrals Music Festival. This year the Festival is coming to Worcester and Llandaff Cathedrals. The festival is a celebration of music in primary schools through the formation of a massed choir. Schools across Wales were invited to take part in the Festival in Llandaff Cathedral on 26th June. RCT schools taking part are Aberdare Town CiW; Caegarw; Darren Las; Gwaunmeisgyn; Hawthorn and Llanilltud Faerdref.

Rachel Kilby - Music Service 01443 744017.

Behaviour Support

Congratulations to Catherine Huntley, Behaviour Support Teacher working in the Taff Ely area who has recently been awarded her Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Studies for 'Understanding and Supporting Children with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties'. Catherine secured funding for her studies through a bursary from the General Teaching Council for Wales.

Karen Williams, who teaches children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties at Penywaun Primary school was recently nominated by one of her pupils for an award as Best Teacher in a Valleys Radio promotion. Karen was recently presented with the thoroughly deserved award at the Maes Manor Hotel.

*Eleanor Aubrey,
Acting Senior Co-ordinator, Behaviour Support Service*

SUBSTANCE AWARENESS FOR EVERYONE (SAFE)



Visit www.getsortedwales.co.uk

RCT Anti-Bullying Work

Bullying is an important issue that affects the lives of many young people today and over the past few years there has been an increasing amount of media attention given to the subject.

Being bullied is a frightening experience that can affect the mental health and well being of a child or young person and can result in long-term detrimental effects lasting well into adulthood. Such effects may present in a number of different ways such as: low self-esteem and confidence; poor emotional development and mental health issues; poor academic performance and attainment; future substance misuse.

Within Rhondda Cynon Taf bullying is a cross-cutting theme that meets key priorities within a number of strategic plans. In order to take steps to tackle the issue effectively, the LEA commissioned the Get Sorted Team to produce a consultation report to provide an overview of current perceptions of and responses to the issue of bullying within RCT.

It is evidenced within the report that whilst there is a great deal of activity in schools and the youth service of RCT in

addressing the issue of bullying, and many examples of innovative and inclusive practice, there are also a number of development needs.

In November 2006, the LEA hosted a conference during National Bullying Awareness Week, to showcase examples of good practice and to promote services and resources available.

Additionally, an Anti-Bullying Officer was appointed by the LEA on a temporary basis to address some of the recommendations within the report and in particular to promote Welsh Assembly Government guidance and offer support in updating policies that meet required standards. A services and resources directory has been compiled and distributed to schools and an Anti-bullying Policy Statement has also been developed and presented at cluster meetings.

To take this work forward, a workshop is scheduled to take place on 20 March 2007, with the aim of developing a multi-agency Anti-Bullying Strategy for RCT that will establish ways in which the LEA can work in partnership with others to tackle this issue effectively.

Jayne Jones