 Canolfan Cymru er
Cydraddoldeb mewn Addysg
Wales Centre for
Equity in Education

WALES CENTRE FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION

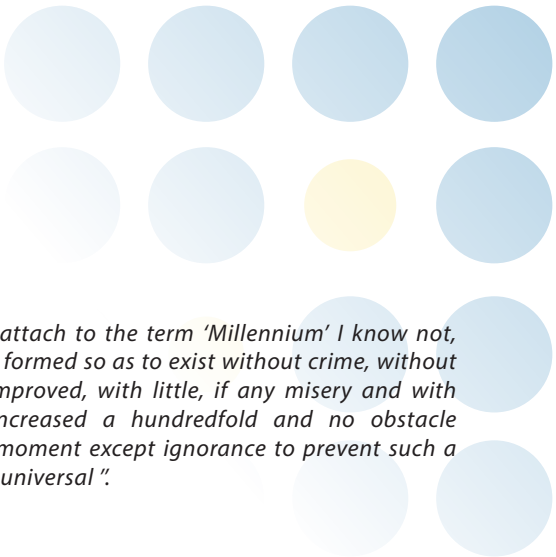
A CHARTER FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION IN WALES



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David



Prifysgol Cymru
University of Wales



“ What ideas individuals may attach to the term ‘Millennium’ I know not, but I know that society may be formed so as to exist without crime, without poverty, with health greatly improved, with little, if any misery and with intelligence and happiness increased a hundredfold and no obstacle whatsoever intervenes at this moment except ignorance to prevent such a state of society from becoming universal ”.

Extract from Robert Owen’s ‘Address to the Inhabitants of New Lanark’
New Year’s Day, 1816

Professor David Egan & Lizzie Swaffield, Wales Centre for Equity in Education

Introduction

As we move into the second decade of devolved government in Wales it is advisable to set out a vision of what Wales could be like twenty or so years from now and what part education should play in helping to achieve the transformation that will be required to realise our ambitions.

Why would we not want to see a Wales with a buoyant and sustainable economy providing plentiful and high quality employment?

Would it be a fair and just society where everyone's life- chances, expectations, aspirations and opportunities for social mobility are excellent?

To underpin all of these laudable aims, will we have created a successful and equitable education system where achievement is not constrained by the influences of gender, ethnicity, place, family situation and background?

Could we create, thereby, what Robert Owen, one of the greatest social reformers produced by Wales called a ' New Millennium'?

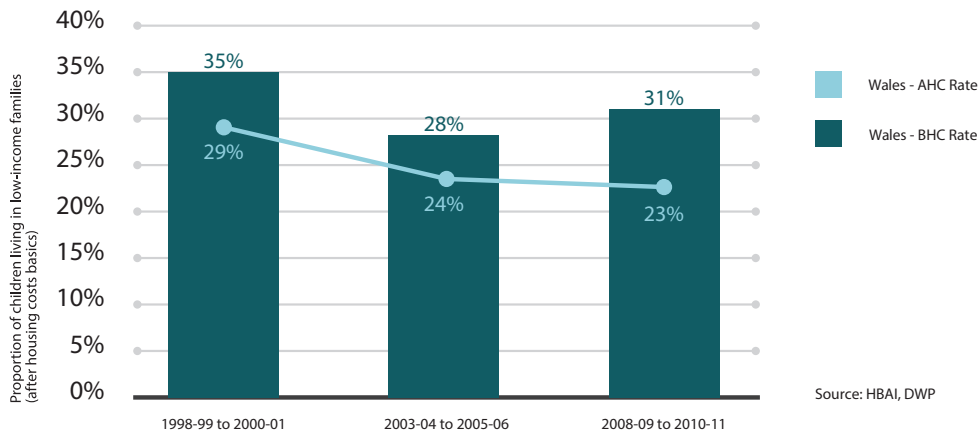
Equity and Inequity in Wales Today

Despite all the progress that Wales as a nation has made prior to and since devolution, we are today far from realising such ambitions. Our economy is in transition and we are attempting to move out of recession. There is significant inequity in our society, with almost a quarter of our people and about one-third of our children living below the poverty line. Nowhere is this more strongly represented than in our education system, where there are persistent gaps in achievement associated with gender, ethnicity, and most of all, poverty.

Various aspects of this inequity in society at large and in particular in education are presented below.

Proportion of children living in low-income households in Wales over time

Welsh Government (2013) Child Poverty Strategy for Wales: Baseline Indicators



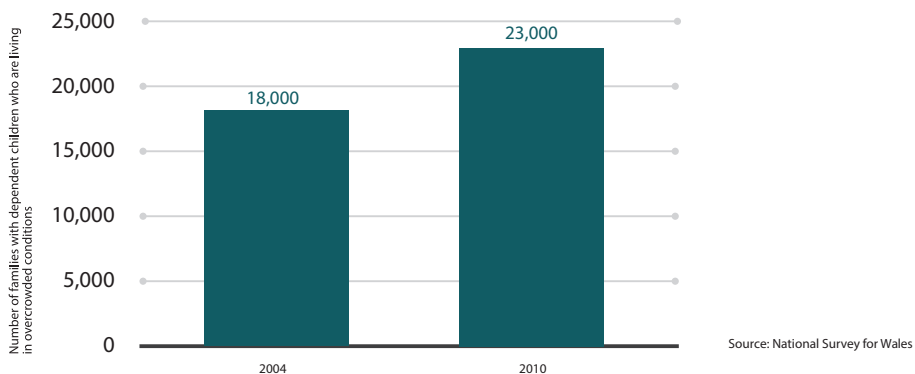
Proportion of workless working age adults by region over time

Welsh Government (2013) Child Poverty Strategy for Wales: Baseline Indicators

| | 2005 | 2011 | Change over time |
|------------------------|------|------|------------------|
| The North | 29% | 33% | Up |
| The Midlands | 27% | 31% | Up |
| The South and the East | 23% | 26% | Up |
| London | 32% | 32% | No change |
| Wales | 31% | 33% | Up |
| Scotland | 27% | 29% | Up |

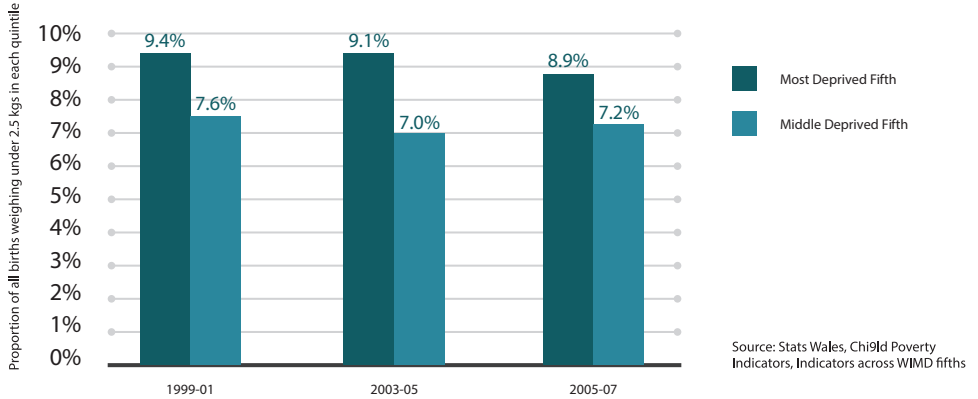
Number of families with dependent children who are living in overcrowded conditions in Wales.

Welsh Government (2013). Child Poverty Strategy for Wales: Baseline Indicators



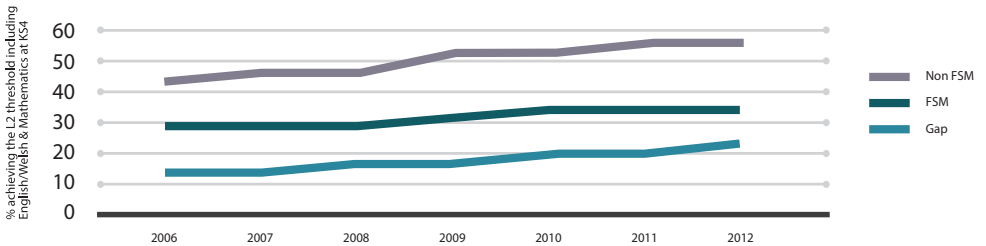
Babies born with low birth weights in Wales.

Welsh Government (2013) Child Poverty Strategy for Wales: Baseline Indicators



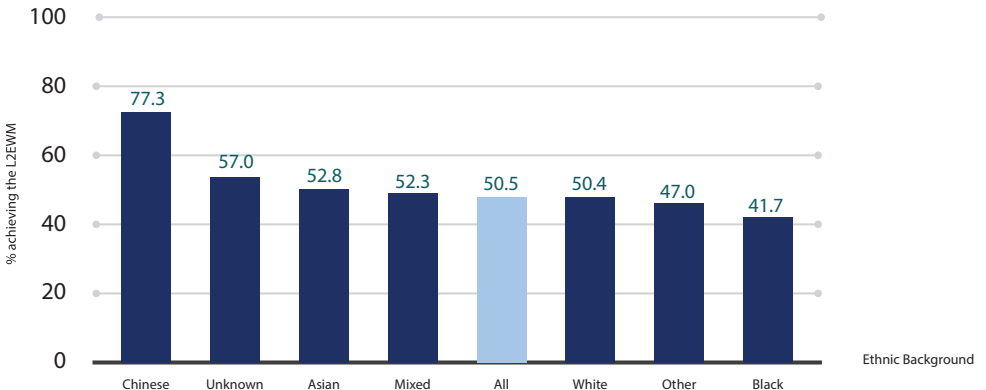
Difference between performance in the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE A*-C in English / Welsh and Maths of FSM and non-FSM pupils at KS4, 2006-2012

Achievement and Entitlement to Free School Meals in Wales, 2012, WELSH GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL BULLETIN SB32/2013



Percentage of pupils achieving the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh (First Language) and Mathematics (L2EWM) at KS4 by main ethnic group, 2010-2012 (aggregated)

Academic Achievement by Pupil Characteristics, 2012 WELSH GOVERNMENT Statistical Bulletin B33/2013



Wales Centre for Equity in Education

The Wales Centre for Equity in Education is a joint initiative between the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and the University of Wales. Its purpose is to make a significant impact on reducing the educational inequalities which currently exist in Wales and to contribute to the vision for a future nation set out above.

It has been established to be a leading national policy and applied research centre focusing on all forms of disadvantage associated with low educational achievement in Wales. It will bring together policy-makers, researchers and practitioners to improve knowledge and understanding of educational inequities and how to tackle the challenges associated with them.

The Centre will be fully integrated within the two university institutions, supporting the development of excellent research and teaching and building their national profile, especially in the areas of teacher education, early years and social inclusion. It will also be closely aligned to the national policy context including the overarching national priority to tackle poverty and to break the link between disadvantage and low educational achievement.

Breaking the Link Between Poverty and Low Achievement

The Centre is committed to making a significant contribution to ending all forms of educational inequity in Wales, in contexts ranging from pre-school to higher education. Its initial focus will be on breaking the link between poverty and low educational achievement.

The Centre will promote the following approaches to tackling this issue and narrowing the gap in achievement:

- Sharing effective practice and disseminating evidence.
- Developing, supporting and monitoring interventions that are carried out pre-school, by schools and local/regional authorities.
- The full engagement of parents and families in education.
- The development of community partnerships and interventions focused on education.

The case studies below provide examples of work already going on in Wales of the type that will be promoted by the Centre to improve policy making and practice:

Case Study: Early Years

The educational provision for three to four year olds within this Integrated Children's Centre in a disadvantaged urban area is inspirational. The stimulating and exciting environment and outstanding teaching enrich their childhood. Children develop into independent, confident individuals who have a strong sense of self-belief and a feeling of respect for themselves and others. The high quality accommodation and educational resources provide children with an outstanding start in many aspects of their lives. The contribution of the nursery to the regeneration of the wider community is immense.

Integrated education, childcare, family support and health services are key factors in determining good outcomes for children and their families. The co-location of providers within Integrated Children's Centres encourages joined up working which prioritises the needs of the child above all others. The Centre acts as a hub for the community with a wide range of organisations delivering a variety of activities for children and families including early years education, childcare and training and family support.

Estyn Inspection Report (2008)

Case Study: Parental engagement

This city centre primary school serves a diverse community with 96% being from ethnic minorities. 43 per cent of the children have free school meals; 49% have English as an Additional Language and 39% have Additional Learning Needs. As part of its commitment to the local community and in order to improve standards of literacy, the school has increasingly made parental engagement a priority.

To achieve this the school has:

- An open-door policy whereby regular communication takes place between the leadership of the school and parents.
- Open mornings for parents to observe learning and teaching.
- Family learning including family literacy classes.
- Inclusive assemblies and celebrations.
- Parents volunteering to support learning in classes.

The school has achieved great success in recent years and has recently been judged to be excellent by Estyn for its current performance and its prospects for improvement.

Estyn (2012) Effective Practice in Tackling Poverty and Disadvantage in Schools

Case Study: Pupil Wellbeing

This primary school is situated in the South Wales Valleys in an area of high socio-economic disadvantage. 26 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has developed a systematic approach to developing the wellbeing of pupils as an essential requirement of high achievement.

Staff and pupils initially audited existing provision for wellbeing. A tracking system was devised to monitor wellbeing and this allows staff to identify pupils who need particular support such as counseling and referral to specialist services. These approaches are closely linked to academic tracking systems to ensure and inform interventions to tackle low achievement by individual pupils and groups of pupils such as those on free school meals.

Over the last four years results in the school have improved considerably and now compare well with similar schools, particularly in the achievement of free school meals pupils.

Estyn (2012) Effective Practice in Tackling Poverty and Disadvantage in Schools

Case Study: Leadership in a Secondary School

The school serves a disadvantaged community where 26% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. A range of interventions have been developed to support low achieving pupils and this has required new approaches to leadership. Leaders of Learning have been appointed who track pupils' progress and when necessary ensure that timely interventions are put in place to remove barriers to progress. They also monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the interventions.

Interventions include mentoring pupils, personalised programmes of learning, and developing partnerships with other agencies supported by the work of Family Engagement Officers.

This work has led to improved attendance, higher levels of achievement, a decrease in exclusions and the strengthening of pupils' aspirations for what they wish to achieve in future.

Estyn Best Practice Case Study; 2012

Case Study: Family Engagement

Save the Children works with Families and Schools Together (FAST) to improve access to the award-winning FAST parental engagement programme. The core aims of this evidence-based prevention programme are to enable children to:

- Succeed in school and have stronger life chances because of improved educational achievement in reading, writing and maths, behaviour and better home–school relationships;
- Live in strengthened families because of improved parent-child bonds, communication and parental confidence;
- Live in stronger communities with increased trust, participation and reduced social isolation.

FAST adopts a universal, participatory and experiential eight-week curriculum to build relationships between parents and children, parents and schools and parents and other parents within the local community. After graduation, parents continue to meet on a monthly basis, growing relationships and gains from participating in the programme. Throughout the programme, children and parents take part in activities such as eating together as a family, family play, learning and communication activities, one to- one parent-child dedicated support, community building and parent-to-other-local-parent time. Each family also receives a hamper of goods, including books and toys, so that they can continue to support their child's learning and development at home.

Save the Children (2012) Child Poverty Snapshots: the Local Picture in Wales

Case Study: Community Partnership

This community of about 3000 people is one of the most disadvantaged places in Wales as ranked by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. It was developed as a council estate in the late 1950s and came to be regarded as a troubled community with high levels of deprivation including high unemployment, poor housing, serious health problems and low levels of educational achievement. In recent years, whilst it continues to be a seriously disadvantaged community, its reputation and resilience has been transformed. This change has been led by the Communities First Partnership, which has drawn in significant support from other agencies, including extensive charitable funding to undertake a series of interventions.

Within this activity education has had a strong profile. The two local primary schools and the local secondary schools where most of the pupils attend have become closely involved in the work. Previously the two primary schools were low performing and the children from the village in the secondary school rarely did well in education, with few proceeding to post-16 education. This level of education performance has now been significantly improved. The attendance, behaviour and more recently the achievement of pupils from the community are now better than the average in the secondary school.

This success has been achieved through a growing commitment to education within the community, involving parents, families, local politicians, various organisations and the education system itself, including further and higher education and adult and work-based learning. The annual 'learning day' is attended by over 100 individuals and organisations, who together plan the provision they will make in the community over the forthcoming year to provide a range of opportunities from pre-school education, support for the schools, through to family and adult education.

The Work of the Wales Centre for Equity in Education

The purpose of the Wales Centre for Equity in Education is to make a significant impact on reducing educational inequities in Wales. It will do this by working at national, regional and local levels to bring about change through evidence based improvements to policy and practice. It will bring together researchers, policy makers and practitioners to create a hub of knowledge and expertise in this important area of social policy.

The vision of the Centre is to be a leading national policy and applied research centre. It will seek to be recognised for its excellence and influential in informing policy making and practice in Wales and beyond.

It will be an important part of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David Group and position the institution as the leading university for this field of education and social policy. It will enhance the Group's strategic development and benefit teaching, learning and research within the institution.

It will promote social justice and inclusion in a way that supports the sustainable development of an equitable, fit-for-purpose education system for future generations in Wales and beyond.

The Centre will achieve this vision through:

- Developing knowledge and understanding of the extent, causes and effects of inequities in educational achievement in Wales.
- Involving practitioners, policy-makers and researchers in collaborative work, creating a hub of expertise to improve policy and practice.
- Developing and supporting the implementation of innovative intervention models and strategies.
- Sharing effective practice and disseminating evidence of what works from across, Wales, the UK and internationally.
- Developing, monitoring and evaluating policy.
- Working closely with the Faculties of Teacher Education and Social Sciences to develop excellent research and teaching and professional development opportunities that contribute to sustaining the outcomes of the Centre.
- Strongly aligning itself to the Welsh Government's overarching priority to prevent and mitigate the impact of poverty and the national priority to break the link between poverty and low educational achievement.

A Centre for Wales

The launch of the Centre represents a commitment by the University of Wales and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David to contribute as national institutions, to the development of Wales as a strong, successful, fair and equitable country. The Centre wishes to be a resource for Wales: its national organisations, the public, private and voluntary sectors, its communities and most of all, its people.

We have already developed a wide range of networks and partnerships and are beginning to undertake our first pieces of work.

We seek, therefore the support, collaboration and interest of those we have invited to our launch and hope that together we can make the difference to make Wales the nation we wish it to be.

If you would like to discuss opportunities to work with us we would be delighted to hear from you on the contact details below.

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