



Raising Aspirations, Raising
Standards Strategy

Merthyr Tydfil

2020 to 2024

Summary

The strategy sets out the key outcomes, activities and behaviours that the council will pursue in support of our corporate priorities and a culture of continuous improvement. In support of the Council's Focus on the Future Plan 2017-2022, the Raising Aspirations Raising Standards Strategy (RARS) will directly influence and impact on one of the Council's priorities of improving attainment. It aims to ensure that children and young people are well placed to move into adult life and employment or further/higher education. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council aims for effective learning and teaching throughout each young person's school experience to enable them to maximise their potential.

Within this strategy, the overarching themes are to raise the aspirations of all our children and young people, and to enable them to attain the highest possible outcomes. We also aim to ensure equity through closing the gap in education outcomes between children from the most and least deprived backgrounds. We believe this will contribute to social and economic prosperity within Merthyr Tydfil.

Our Pledge

The RARS Strategy is a major priority for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council in its role of supporting our children and young people to aspire to achieve the very best and contribute to a vibrant and successful community. We are committed to enabling all learners, of all ages at all stages, to aspire, attain and achieve to their full potential.

In Merthyr Tydfil we believe all children and young people are entitled to the best possible life chances that we can give them by enhancing their access to the highest quality educational opportunities, whilst challenging their aspirations to achieve not just their expected potential but beyond.

To achieve this, we will work with our partners to address underachievement and deliver real improvements within our schools and other educational settings. As we move forward we need to ensure we are meeting the changing needs and aspirations of children and young people as they travel on their educational journeys. We want to make a positive impact both on individual lives and in the way the young people go on to live, work and learn.

Currently Merthyr Tydfil is faced with great challenges in driving up standards. We know we need to do more in order to deliver positive changes across all our educational settings and currently outcomes across them are too variable. We wish to focus on a number of specific priority areas:

1. Improve standards of literacy, numeracy and digital competency across all educational settings.
2. Improve collaboration across all educational settings, including partners and stakeholders such as local employers and parents.
3. Improve skills of all learners to enable them to access further education, employment or training
4. Ensure an integrated approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all involved in education which enables practitioners to focus on raising aspirations and raising standards

The next five years will be a period of significant challenge for the Council with ongoing budget constraints expected to continue. However, the Council is committed to the development and improvement of Educational services, and these will be the continued focus for all in the Local Authority, educational settings and schools across the County Borough. This will help to ensure that we continue to tackle the most important issues for Merthyr Tydfil. The RARS Strategy will also support the Council's long term focus on addressing inequality in society.

It is therefore imperative that this strategy is underpinned by individual service and school strategies - that the culture and ethos of raising aspirations, attainment and achievement is embedded in all our work and that we work with all our partners and

the wider community to ensure the best learning opportunities for our children and young people.

A key part of this strategy is high quality leadership. We recognise that high quality leadership is the most important factor in improving teaching and learning and encouraging pupils to achieve their very best. This includes leaders at all levels including governors and other bodies who are responsible for raising aspirations and standards. We have many excellent leaders across the County Borough who are currently delivering great standards of education in their settings. However going forward we need to strive to allow effective and successful practices to be shared across all educational establishments, thereby developing a culture of collaboration where the educational outcomes of all children and young people across Merthyr Tydfil is 'everybody's responsibility'.

Our Commitment therefore is that:

Through effective leadership at all levels, the education community within Merthyr Tydfil will raise **aspirations** and raise **standards** to ensure **successful futures for all**.

1 Improve standards of literacy, numeracy and digital competency across all educational settings.

Description

This outcome aims to increase attainment and achievement for all learners, from Early Years to KS4, across all Merthyr Tydfil schools. Raised attainment and achievement increases personal, social and economic opportunities, and ensures that young people are in a good position to fulfil their potential.

Activities

The main activities of the service during the period of the strategy will be to:

- ...
- ...
- ...

To be established through the consultation phase

2 Improve collaboration across all educational settings, including partners and stakeholders such as local employers and parents.

Description

This outcome aims to continually improve our collaboration between all our educational settings, with our external partners and with other stakeholders who also influence children and young people’s aspirations and attainment such as businesses in the local area and parents. We need effective collaboration along with good integration of services and provision where appropriate.

The quality of engagement that parents have with their child’s learning is a key factor to ensuring successful outcomes. School leaders will improve and increase ways in which parents and families can engage in partnership with schools to support their children.

Activities

The main activities of the service during the period of the strategy will be to:

- ...
- ...
- ...

To be established through the consultation phase

3 Improve skills of all learners to enable them to access further education, employment or training.

Description

This outcome aims to link the world of learning to the world of work more successfully, ensuring our children and young people have the right skills and qualifications businesses need. It also aims to ensure all learners are in a place to continue into further education or training if they wish.

Better collaboration with local businesses and colleges ensures a clearer focus for young people on what opportunities are available to them, so they can tailor the end of their educational journey with a more targeted goal in sight.

Activities

The main activities of the service during the period of the strategy will be to:

- ...
- ...
- ...

To be established through the consultation phase

- 4 Ensure an integrated approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all involved in education which enables practitioners to focus on raising aspirations and raising standards.

Description

This outcome aims to ensure continuous professional development activities are a central and established part of a practitioner’s work. It promotes a ‘learning culture’ where practitioners are involved in a continuous process of learning, development and improvement. It will focus on developing leaders at all levels in order to further develop capacity and improve outcomes.

Activities

The main activities of the service during the period of the strategy will be to:

- ...
- ...
- ...

To be established through the consultation phase

Benefits

The strategy aims to produce the following benefits:

- Increased attendance across all schools in the County Borough.
- A highly skilled workforce that can deliver the very best educational experience to all learners.
- Continued professional development to ensure staff remain skilled and resilient to be able to support the delivery of the overall goal to raise aspirations and raise standards.

How will we measure our success?

No child is left behind

Everyone is entitled to an education

CAP 9 Data

Percentage of pupils that leave school without a qualification

Number of NEETs

Attendance

Average point scores for literacy, numeracy, science and digital literacy

ESTYN – All schools are assessed to be ‘good’ or better

Continue to move closer to the Welsh average

To be finalised as part of the consultation phase

Strategy Governance

The process and timescales for the development, publication and review of the strategy are set out, including consultation with the appropriate stakeholders.

Group	Governance Scrutiny Role	Reporting Frequency
MTCBC Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engagement on the strategy and outcomes b. Regular updates on the progress of specific programmes of work 	

Strategy Monitoring

An annual review will be undertaken and reported to the council’s Corporate Management Team.

An end of strategy review will be undertaken in the final year of the strategy to report on the achievement in the outcomes and final position in the performance indicators (against the target) and the agreed actions.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

When planning, making decisions and implementing changes, we need to take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Merthyr Tydfil in the future. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act.

There are 5 key sustainable ways of working which define this principle and are what we need to think about to show that we have applied the sustainable development principle. We need to make sure that our actions today fulfil present requirements without affecting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

While compiling the RARS strategy we have followed the 5 ways of working, to help us work better together and to tackle some of the long-term challenges we are facing.

The Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 sets out sustainable development principles by which we will work to so that we ensure the best for our future generations. Five ways of working are set out in the Act and these are outlined below in terms of this strategy.



Long-term

This strategy is a long-term approach to improving the education provision in Merthyr Tydfil. The short-term needs will continually be balanced against the longer-term needs as outlined in this strategy.



Prevention

We will seek to maintain the importance of prevention and early intervention with children to reduce any risks or challenges that may occur later on. Risks such as those associated with adverse childhood experiences. Improving the quality of a child's life and well-being is key.



Collaboration

The strategy commits us to develop these good practices that are already in place and to develop new and improved collaborative thinking.



Integration

The strategy is not inclusive to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and will see key partnerships being developed or continuing.



Involvement

We have involved and will continue to involve all stakeholders in education across the County Borough.

Appendices

- Background and Theory
- Detailed Action Plan

DRAFT