

**“Connecting the pieces...  
...developing Bettws Early Learning Community.”**



**Lindsey Watkins**  
Head teacher,  
Millbrook Primary School.

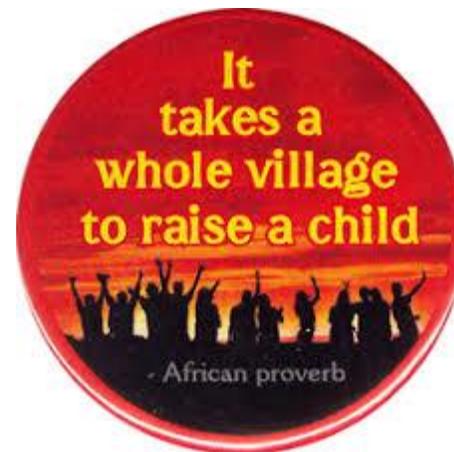


# Millbrook as a key agent of change

We have been researching approaches to improve the life chances and attainment of our children for many years. Our research has been local, national and on an international scale even visiting community school settings in the USA.

As a result of the research we have worked with Newport City Council and other key partners to develop a multi-agency approach. We have helped to pilot Children First – a place-based approach based a theory of change.

**It takes a whole village  
to raise a child...**



## Previously...



BRITISH COUNCIL  
Wales  
Cymru  
INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY  
USA VISIT 2011

Lindsey Watkins was part of an International Professional Learning Community in 2011 & 2012 tasked with looking at how schools in New York close the gap between deprivation and achievement.

The Children's Aid Society



Community Schools in New York City

Schools that were visited worked in partnership with The Children's Aid Society who had developed a model of community schools.

A Community School is a strategy for organizing the resources of the community around student success. It is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, services, supports and opportunities leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone—all day, evenings and weekends, year round.

International research  
Facilitated by The British  
Council  
& through work with  
partners overseas



From  
New York  
to Cincinnati  
& beyond



After school Learning



Health Care

The Children's Aid Society



Social Care



Family Support



Community Focused

## New York led to Cincinnati.



Coalition for Community Schools  
Because Every Child Deserves Every Chance



Cincinnati, OH | April 9 - 11, 2014  
[www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)

Mark Your Calendars for the 2014 Community Schools National Forum  
**Community Schools: The Engine of Opportunity**  
Cincinnati, OH - The Duke Energy Convention Center  
April 9-11 | Pre-Conference Sessions start April 8

Lindsey Watkins was asked to present as part of a group of 4 head teachers at this conference. The 4 schools: Millbrook Primary, Newport; Roath Park, Cardiff; Pencaerau Primary, Cardiff & Maes Y Morfa Primary, Llanelli.

Research:  
ongoing  
professional  
learning

## The Cincinnati Solution...



Health Clinic on site to tackle obesity issues



Close family partnerships.



Community Director, Ms Bell



Principal Renee Rashad

Schools become Community Learning Centres.



Our vision is founded on our own beliefs and experiences but greatly enhanced by our overseas visits and research. The model below is adapted from The Children's Aid society, New York.



## Our vision...

- Happy children learn
- To support the child effectively we must support the family
- To support the family effectively, we must support and embrace the community
- On site multi-agency support for families and the community supports us in this vision.
- This is most effective when we engage with children & their families from a very early age.

By nurturing families and the community in this way we give our pupils the very best chance to achieve. This enables us to bridge the poverty gap.

“At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents.”

- Jane D. Hull

Being  
ACE  
Aware

# It's all about relationships!

## Our Three Mantras

- ◆ It's all about relationships
- ◆ Everything has to be negotiated—all the time
- ◆ For community schools to work, the partners have to have the word "yes" written in their hearts

Millbrook Primary has developed good working relationships with all of its key partners.

Millbrook Primary continuously works at its relationships with each of its key partners through regular meetings – this is now being structured and developed further by Bettws ELC. Just like a family – there can be differences of opinion.

Our Bettws ELC shares the same vision and goal – we all have yes written in our hearts.



*"Learning about caring;  
caring about learning."*



# Partnership Power

A structure of multi-agency work has been set up and established across Newport over the last few years. Known locally as Team Around the Cluster, a variety of agencies are located within each cluster at a school or similar setting. Agencies include: Families First, Flying Start, Social Services & Education Welfare. Millbrook Primary is one of the host sites for Team Around the Cluster. Since this has been established, Millbrook Primary has seen a significant reduction in the number of Children on the Child Protection Register. The most influential factor for this, is the way in which the agencies work together.



Each agency is a key piece of our Early Learning Community jigsaw. We need to connect them together to make the work have most impact.

# Multi-agency Training

We have had a firm focus on ensuring consistency amongst the way that we work across clusters. This has led to:

- multi-agency training
- Shared practice
- Site visits to other settings and to Children's Centres across the UK
- Research and review facilitated by Welsh Government and Save the Children.
- Our overseas partners have supported us in this.



Prof Joanne Ferrara shares her expertise with partners at Millbrook



Children First Pioneer Meeting



# Making a difference through Multi-agency collaboration

Collaboration across agencies has strengthened the provision that we offer to our families and our communities. This includes:

- Collaboration with Gwent Police to train staff across Newport and establish Operation Encompass. This allows the early exchange of information between education and police when domestic violence has occurred.
- Collaboration with Gwent Police to pilot and establish the Heddlu Bach/Mini Police initiative
- Collaboration with The Ace Hub Wales and The Education Achievement Service. All schools across Newport have had ACE training for professionals. Through the pilot we have provided multi-agency training. As a result, we have developed training for families at Millbrook.
- Collaboration with Save the Children Wales has enabled us to research and pilot Families Connect for 3 year olds as a new early intervention programme.
- Collaboration with Barnardos Cymru to pilot a child-centred approach.
- Continued international research and collaboration





# Making a difference through Community collaboration

Following training, we have adopted a Theory of Change model and have striven to collaborate with our community directly.

This has led to the development of a variety of community initiatives aimed at tackling local issues. For example:

- Community safety – the mini police have collaborated to promote a safer parking campaign
- A more resilient community – a Pride in Bettws group has been set up and the school and residents have taken part in a number of litter picks
- An Ace aware community – a group of parents have presented at a conference to raise awareness of ACEs.



# Early Collaboration



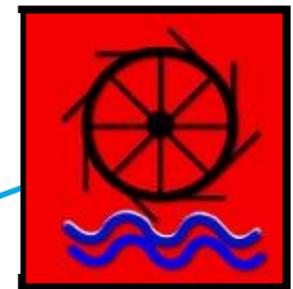
## Collaborating with our Flying Start Partners



Supporting Flying Start to Nursery  
transition through early intervention

Staff from both settings work closely together as one team to:

- share ideas and professional learning on early years pedagogy- this has helped to develop a consistent approach
- Provide children and families with enhanced learning opportunities eg use of the onsite forest school environment
- To share learning experiences to support transition eg visits to both settings by both children and families
- To exchange information ensuring that we both provide the best possible support



# Early Intervention



- Multi-agency panel meetings help to ensure that our onsite Family First provision is appropriately allocated. These allocate provision for families across our cluster and beyond.
- Family learning opportunities begin in Flying Start and are continued in Millbrook Little Acorns Nursery.
- Relationships are built and developed with families from an early stage.
- This is continued throughout a child's time in nursery and then into reception and beyond.
- We conduct home visits for all nursery children to further build relationships and find out what further support may be needed by the child and the family.

# Early Intervention: family learning



Parents & family members have regular opportunities to join us in Flying Start, nursery and throughout the school. This has helped to further forge bonds between families and their children as well as strengthening the positive relationship between home and school.

**Parents are our most important partners.**



# Systems Change

**We are taking a systems change approach**

This means working in partnership to improve children's life chances by addressing how people work together across a community, and what is going on under the surface.



## DEVELOPING NEWPORT EARLY LEARNING COMMUNITY



We have dug deeper to further improve our partnership working by creating Bettws Early Learning Community. Save the Children Wales have significantly supported us in this goal. Our goal is to make the pieces of our jigsaw fit even better.....



# Overview of the Early Learning Communities project

Save the Children UK seeks to improve early learning outcomes for children growing up in poverty.

The Early Learning Communities project aims to:

<i>What?</i>	Improve early learning outcomes
<i>Who?</i>	For children growing up in poverty
<i>How?</i>	Through the cumulative effects of strategic/systemic and programmatic activities in each area.

We are testing this approach by partnering with organisations with the same ambition in four Communities across the UK.

# The Bettws Early Learning Community Toolkit

Save the Children have developed a toolkit for Newport Early Learning Community based on research and evidence. The toolkit:

- Draws together conversations across all Early Learning communities
- Gives a process for developing an Early Learning Strategy for our local area
- Provides a template for our local strategy
- Provides a tool for engaging with the evidence on improving early learning outcomes
- Provides resources and expertise
- Enables us to continuously reflect, test and learn



**Save the Children**

0.  
ORIENTATION

1.  
WHAT MATTERS  
AND WHAT WORKS

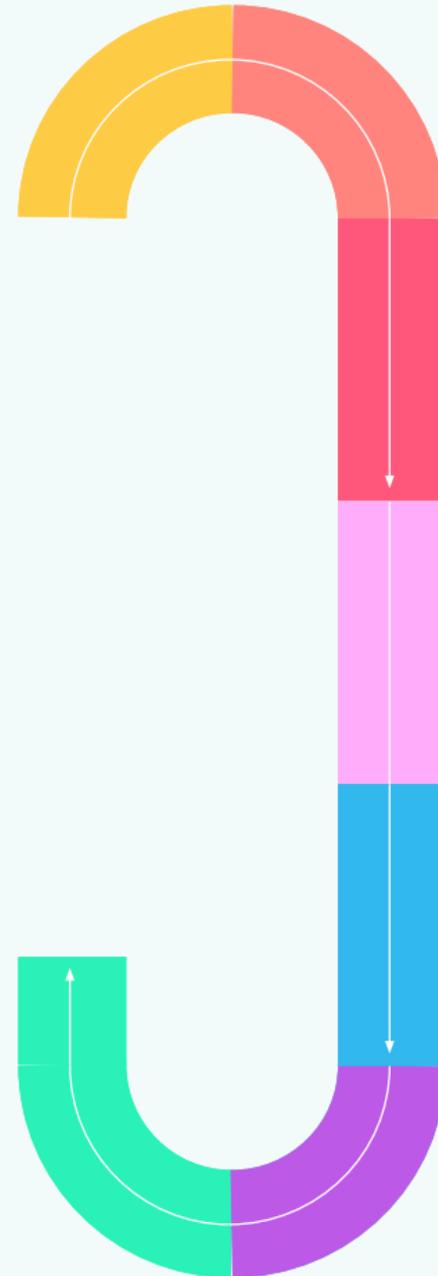
2.  
THE LOCAL SYSTEM  
AND PARTNERSHIP

3.  
DETERMINING  
LOCAL PRIORITIES

4.  
BUILDING  
CAPACITY AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE

5.  
CRAFTING  
A STRATEGY

6.  
IMPLEMENTATION,  
TESTING AND  
LEARNING





# Partners working together to bring about systems change



Save the Children

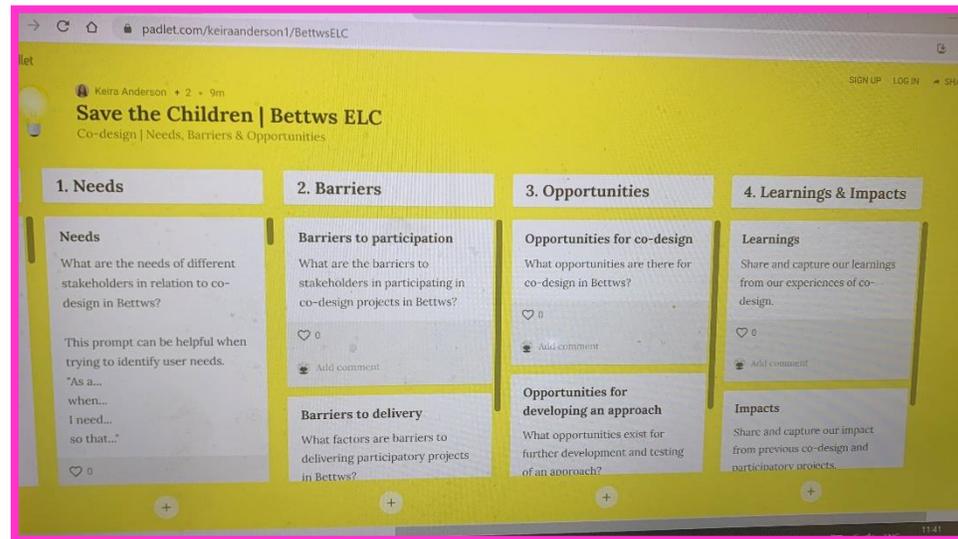


We have now established this work in Bettws. Partners have come together to discuss provision and think of smarter ways of working.



# What has worked well?

## Community engagement, research & collaboration

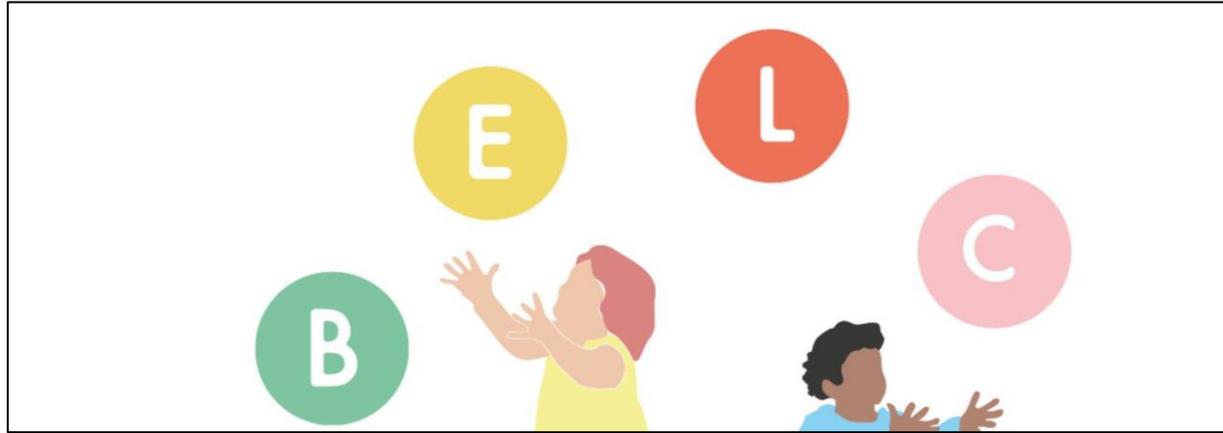


**Bettws ELC | Co-design**  
Needs, Barriers & Opportunities

**16/03/2021 | 1000 - 1130**

- 2 mins silence
- 2 mins discuss
- 2 mins silence
- 2 mins discuss

Lindsey is a founding partner of Bettws Early Learning Community. This is a community partnership organization developed through Save the Children with key partners from Newport City Council, the community, Aneurin Bevan Health Board, Gwent police etc. We are continuing to work with the board to co-design support for families in the community to reduce the barriers to learning. During the pandemic this has provided a wealth of support & learning. For example, we have had direct access to mental health support for families and we have piloted a triage approach with Newport City Council & Aneurin Bevan Health Board.



# Bettws Early Learning Community

BLOG READ: One year on Save's Rebecca Thomas, Lead for The Bettws Early Learning Community writes about togetherness and helping each other during lockdown on the Bettws estate in Newport: <https://bit.ly/3fEBnXY>

Children and their teachers also share their experiences on this lovely short film: <https://bit.ly/3drbl7Y>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/BettwsELC/>



# Together we can connect the pieces of the Jigsaw and make a difference

