

**COUNCIL: 24 NOVEMBER 2022**

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**DEPUTY LEADER & EDUCATION STATEMENT**

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**Free School Meals for Primary School Children**

Since the start of the new school term in September 2022, whole classes of Reception aged children have been enjoying free school meals as part of the Welsh Government's Universal Free School Meal scheme. Further year groups are to be provided with free school meals through a phased approach, with the aim of rolling out the scheme to all primary aged children over the next three years. It is hoped that Years 1 and 2 will be catered for from the Summer Term 2023. The Welsh Government has announced that benefits-based free school meals will continue to be provided to children during the school holidays, up until the end of next year's February Half Term holiday. In Cardiff, the provision will be delivered via a supermarket voucher to be emailed to families before the start of the school break.

**Passport to the City**

Cardiff Council and Cardiff University have formed a partnership to deliver the ambition of Passport to the City as set out in our 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' policy commitments. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the Leader of the Council and the University's President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Colin Riordan, to support the delivery of the Passport to the City programme. Cardiff University has made this partnership the flagstone of their 2022/23 civic mission, recognising that a good education is the surest route out of poverty and that the long-term prosperity of the city relies on us supporting our children and young people to reach their potential. It aims to promote social mobility by supporting high quality, exciting and innovative learning activities and experiences to children aged 5 to 16 years. A fundamental principle is that participation is voluntary, enabling children to explore different learning environments and to become independent and confident learners.

**Qualification Wales Consultation on New Qualifications**

On 6 October 2022, Qualifications Wales launched its "Qualified for the Future" consultation via an online seminar hosted at Llanishen High School. This provided information about what and how learners will be assessed from 2025. Qualifications Wales has been working on a new set of GCSEs that will realise the ambition of the Curriculum for Wales and meet the needs of learners. Between 4 October and 14 December 2022, Qualifications Wales is consulting on proposals for 26 new GCSEs and other related qualifications. More details about how to respond to the consultation can be found at: [Have your say - Qualifications Wales](#).

## **Debate Mate**

The Debate Mate Schools Programme is running for the second year across eight secondary schools in Cardiff, funded by the Cardiff Commitment and delivered by Debate Mate, a charity that aims to tackle social mobility by delivering after-school debate clubs in schools in areas of high deprivation, using a highly effective peer-to-peer mentoring model. This year's programme was launched on 10 November 2022 at City Hall and all eight secondary schools – Cardiff West Community High School, Cantonian High School, Cathays High School, Eastern High School, Fitzalan High School, Ysgol Glantaf, St Teilo's CiW High School and Willows High School – will now embark on a 17-week debating programme, developing key transferable skills whilst also improving a range of higher order thinking skills such as confidence, teamwork and leadership. In addition, this year's Debate Mate programme includes an 'Accelerate Programme', which is an intervention scheme for students that are the most challenging to reach, with the aim of re-engaging the students in their education. Through empowering the pupils with the skills to express themselves and form persuasive arguments, this programme helps give these young people a purpose and self-confidence that can be significant in influencing their behaviour.

## **Open Your Eyes Week**

Children in Years 5 & 6 from across Cardiff Primary Schools have had their eyes opened to the different opportunities available in the world of work this month. Cardiff Commitment's Open Your Eyes Week challenges gender, race and class stereotypes and provides 'lightbulb moments' by bringing a variety of inspiring professionals into the classroom. It enables pupils to discover their passions, develop their dreams, explores their place in the world of work and realises our vision to be a city working in partnership to inspire its children and young people towards a better future. Research by the OECD also suggests that pupils need to learn about career options early to combat ingrained stereotyping that sets in at primary school age.

188 school classes registered for Open Your Eyes Week, which equated to approximately 5,640 pupil engagements with employers from across the city's growth sectors. Pupils were inspired by speakers from PWC, Admiral, BBC Wales, Companies House, Eversheds Sutherland, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board, Andrew Scott, We Care Wales and St David's Shopping Centre.

## **Compass for Life Programme**

The Compass for Life programme is being developed with youth engagement group, United2Change (U2C), and will work with young people and their families to develop their future ambitions and aspirations by identifying their 'North Star'. The Cardiff Commitment will identify sectors that 'North Stars' fall into and provide a programme of employer engagement to be delivered with U2C. The programme is innovative, even using Lego to help stimulate creativity and families express what they would like to achieve, and was delivered using the Serious Play methodology.

## **Expressive Arts Showcase – Mural at Grangetown Primary School**

We are using our work on the Music Strategy as a template for a new Cultural Strategy focused on supporting and celebrating Cardiff's creative talent. A key part of the strategy is to ensure that young people from all backgrounds can access the world class amenities the city has to offer. So, in the first year of the Council supporting schools to realise the new Curriculum for Wales, our partners on the Expressive Arts Industry Forum have delivered 12 exciting projects benefitting over 1,000 pupils in the city. This fantastic collaboration is going from strength to strength to ensure our young people enjoy the vast wealth of creativity within the city, but also have the pathways into the work opportunities that these industries have to offer. I was delighted to visit the showcase at Grange Pavilion and visit Grangetown Primary School for the unveiling of their mural, which was developed in partnership with Unify Creative.

## **Tredegarville Church in Wales Primary School**

Some school children and staff from Tredegarville Church in Wales Primary School in Adamsdown have had the opportunity to be part of a sound and film project about the people who live in the Adamsdown and Splott areas of Cardiff. HOSPES is an immersive, site-specific installation and online portal, which places Cardiff Royal Infirmary in its historical and social context and has been created by artist John Meirion Rea. The film and other short videos from the project can be viewed at: <https://www.hospescardiff.com/>

## **Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2024**

Last month, care-experienced young people from the Bright Sparks group participated in a development workshop that spanned two days with Cardiff Youth Service. This workshop was an opportunity for young people to develop a video which shared key messages of what they would like to see from Cardiff Council and professionals as Corporate Parents. The young people developed a script, chose the music, and then recorded messages in their own voices.

At a recent engagement session between children and young people and members of the Council's Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee, I had the pleasure of meeting some of the young people who developed the video. These powerful messages show the importance of working together and highlight how we all have a responsibility to support our children looked after and care leavers to help them be happy, safe and to thrive. This fantastic work can be viewed on YouTube at: [Cardiff Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2024 / Strategaeth Rhianta Corfforaethol 2021-2024 - YouTube](#)

**Councillor Sarah Merry**  
**Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Education**  
**18 November 2022**