



Vale School Governors' Association Cymdeithas Llywodraethwyr Ysgolion y Fro

and Governor Support Unit

Newsletter



Note from the Chair

How do you keep up to date with the world of Education? As governors there is a tendency to rely on the professionals – the Headteacher and Teacher Governors - to tell us what is going on. The really fanatical may get the Times Educational Supplement (TES) Cymru. The anoraks surf the Governors Wales website or try and sift out the Welsh stuff from the information helpfully provided on so-called national (for which read English) websites.

The Governor Support Unit provides excellent training courses for new governors and on major changes in legislation. But how can experienced governors, and some of our governors who have many years of dedicated service, stop getting stale?

We try to fill that gap with two particular initiatives. It was great that we had nearly fifty governors at the second Education Update and Briefing Session for Chairs and Vice Chairs at the

beginning of February. This is the opportunity to hear things from the horse's mouth – well the mouths of the Senior Officers in charge of Education, anyway. It is an opportunity to put a face to the names on the various missives that emanate from Provincial House. The chance to ask questions is also being seized upon. For example: How does a governor know that a school is being managed properly? Why is there a disparity between per-pupil funding for different schools?

I look forward to seeing many of you at the annual VSGA/Governor Support Unit Conference on Saturday 6th March 2010 at the Vale of Glamorgan Hotel. We have some excellent and entertaining speakers, and hopefully it won't feel like training at all.

Martin Price

Chair of VSGA and Vice-Chair of Governors, St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic High School, Barry

A School Governor's Guide to the Law – Updated and Revised

School governing bodies are created by law and their roles and responsibilities are set out in law.

All school governors should know and understand their roles and legal responsibilities and how these fit in with the responsibilities of the head teacher, the Local Authority and the Welsh Assembly Government, and other parties such as diocesan authorities and foundations, where applicable.

The publication 'A School Governor's Guide to the Law' has recently been revised and updated by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to help you be an effective governor. It is intended to be used as a reference book for when you need advice. Please find below a link to WAG's website where you can access the revised Governors Guide to the Law.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/schools/schoolgovernors/?lang=en>

The GSU has ordered sufficient hard copies for every single Vale governor but currently we are awaiting for them to be printed and distributed. As soon as the GSU receive hard copies from WAG, we will contact governing bodies to arrange distribution.

If in the meantime, you have any queries about the Guide to the Law, please contact the GSU on 01446 709106/8

Jeremy Morgan
Governor Support Unit

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Special points of interest:

- AVAGO was formed in 1996 and re-launched in 2006 as Vale School Governors' Association (VSGA)
- The Management Committee is made up of 15 elected governors together with 2 elected parent governor representatives

VSGA was set up to:

- Promote best practice in governance in schools within the Vale of Glamorgan LEA
- To promote partnership amongst schools and between schools and the LEA
- To work with stakeholders to ensure adequate resources for schools within the LEA
- To represent the Association's views on issues relating to school governance and the management and resourcing of schools to relevant authorities and organisations

Community Focused Schools

'A community Focused School is one that provides a range of services and activities, often beyond the School day, to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community'

(Community Focused Schools, Circular No 34/2003, National Assembly for Wales)

Why Community Focused Schools?

Children and young people learn better and are in a better position to fulfil their potential if they are happy and healthy. Research shows that a range of factors and to help meet the needs of children and young people. This approach supports the core role in schools to improve learning as well as helping to address the needs of families and communities.

'Education does not just depend on schools. They are influenced by a range of factors including poverty, family circumstance, housing and health'

(School Effectiveness Framework: Building effective learning communities together, Welsh Assembly Government, February 2008)

Community Focused Schools provision responds to needs and priorities and can include: out of hours learning, childcare, intergenerational work, sports, and leisure activities, extended services and multi agency work. The work supports the 'in-school learning' and is about more than just the dual use of school buildings, it involves working in partnership with key partners to achieve a range of priorities, for example, in school development plans, school effectiveness framework, councils' community plan, health social and wellbeing and the children and young peoples plan.

The CFS team in the Vale are working with schools to build positive partnerships with others to address the needs of children and young people out of school hours in the following ways.



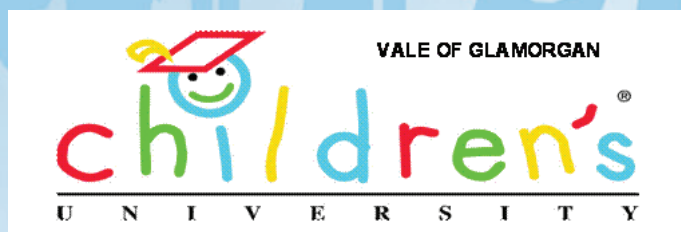
Pyramid Volunteers - 37 volunteers in Barry Island Primary School playground learning games and activities to engage with children in the clubs.

Following the successful pilot held in Llantwit Major Cluster schools a further 10 Pyramid clubs will be running in the Vale from February 2010.

37 local volunteers from schools and the community came together for a weekend of training to support the running of clubs in primary schools across the Vale of Glamorgan. Coordinated by the Community Focused Schools (CFS) Team and supported by the CFS Child care grant, the schools in the Vale have embraced the opportunity to offer these unique after school clubs for their pupils. The clubs focus on the emotional wellbeing of children and are run by trained volunteers who provide a positive fun environment full of activities which foster a feeling of wellbeing and build confidence in children.

The pilot which ran 2008/9 showed how effective this approach was, with both schools and parents reporting changes in the confidence levels of children who had attended. The clubs helped them to engage more fully in school activity as well as give them the confidence to get involved in extra curriculum activity. This scheme also links effectively with the Welsh Baccalaureate in Comprehensive schools offering a unique opportunity for Young people in the 6th form to engage in activities which support local primary schools.

The Vale of Glamorgan Children's University (CU) awards credits to young people who attend learning activities out of school hours. The Children's University adopts a holistic approach to education, believing that all aspects of learning contribute to the development of skills. A student's participation in activities outside of school can contribute greatly to the development of 'the whole child' and this scheme encourages children and young people to engage in learning activities out of school hours.





Mr P Whitcombe, Head Teacher of Bryn Hafren School, Janet Haywood, Head Teacher of Barry Island Primary School and Mr D Swallow, Head Teacher of Barry Comprehensive, with former pupils of Barry Island Primary who are attending the Homework Club in the school.

By engaging with the CU scheme enables schools and organisations to provide opportunities for students to gain credit for participating in out of school activity. The aim of raising the self-esteem of students to believe in themselves as effective learners, this, in turn leads to an increased level of confidence, which will enable students to reach their potential in all areas. It also provides a broad framework within each student can reach their maximum potential in whatever area of learning they desire.

The Community Focused Schools agenda acknowledges this and embraces the philosophy. The purpose of the Vale of Glamorgan's Children's University is to acknowledge the value in out of school activity and award credits for participation rather than the traditional educational models of rewarding achievement against predetermined standards.

Working in partnership to maximise resources and address needs in local communities has led to several innovative Community Focused Schools developments funded by the CFS Childcare grant in the Vale of Glamorgan. Working with the Youth Service, play development team and schools the CFS team have supported the development of safe places for children and young people to go after school.

Barry Island Primary School has recently launched an after school homework club. The school and the Youth Service are working together to provide an after school club for young people 11 years+ who return home on school transport from a range of comprehensive schools in the Vale.

Cadoxton Primary School has timetabled traditionally run school clubs and is extending their provision to provide a variety of activities for children to engage; in addition to this the school day is being further extended with opportunities for play. The Play development team are working with CFS and the school to run sessions for 4 – 11 year olds three evenings a week from 4pm – 5.30pm. This is offered in the school grounds with local volunteers being encouraged to support the club. Volunteers will be offered play training to support and develop the community focus within the work.

Community Focused Schools has coordinated a 10 week pilot mentoring project in six schools in the Vale of Glamorgan. Seven trained volunteers have been matched to the six schools to work with an identified pupil, or a small group of pupils, to help motivate and encourage them in the classroom. The volunteers are all over the age of 50, have been trained and CRB checked and come from various areas of the Vale.

Mentors work alongside their pupil in the classroom giving help and support to them in all areas of the school curriculum. They aim to enhance the child's wellbeing building self-esteem, self-confidence and improve their academic skills by helping them to enjoy learning.

Lynne Osborne

Community Focused Schools Manager

Tel: 01446 709560 or email: losborne@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Religious Education

Aim: To ensure governing bodies are fully conversant with the legal requirements for RE in schools and any changes to statutory requirements.

Religious education is part of a broader, developmental process of education, which seeks to help young people make sense of their own experience and the world at large - leading the pupils to learn both about religion and from religion. Religious education should be open to pupils of any religious persuasion or those with no religious belief.

Religious education must be provided for all registered pupils including those in reception classes but excluding pupils in nursery schools and nursery classes. This includes pupils at post 16, unless formally withdrawn by parental request.

For **maintained schools**, religious education must be in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. For **voluntary controlled schools** religious education is given in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus however, if parents so request, arrangements should be made for religious education to be provided in line with any trust deed or the practice followed before the school became controlled. For **voluntary aided schools** religious education is to be determined by the governors in accordance with the trust deed or in line with practice before the school became a voluntary school.

The local authority's agreed syllabus for RE outlines the requirements for religious education for the Foundation Phase and all key stages (including Post 16) and schools should ensure they adhere to these requirements.

Useful guidance in supporting schools include the locally agreed syllabus and documents available from the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS).

Further information can be obtained from:

- The Vale of Glamorgan *Agreed Syllabus for RE*
- *National exemplar framework for religious education for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales*: Guidance for local education authorities and agreed syllabus conferences – DCELLS
- *Religious education: Guidance for 14 to 19-year-olds* - DCELLS - This provides guidance on the relevance and benefit of skills and knowledge that young people might acquire through religious education 14-19 and contains case studies of the possible delivery models.

Contacts

Curriculum and Assessment Division, Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Welsh Assembly Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ

Tel: 0800 083 6003 e-mail: C&A3-14.C&A3-14@wales.gsi.gov.uk or by visiting the Welsh Assembly Government's website www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills

Collective Worship

Aim: To ensure governing bodies are fully conversant with the legal requirements for collective worship in schools and any changes to statutory requirements.

The Education reform Act 1988 and Welsh Office Circular 10/94 set out the legal requirements for collective worship in schools in Wales. These requirements apply to pupils in maintained schools. The requirements do not apply to colleges of further education, including tertiary colleges, or to nursery schools or nursery classes in infant or primary schools.

Schools must provide collective worship daily for all registered pupils. Most acts of collective worship in each term should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. It can take place at any time in the school day and provided to pupils in any sized group –for example as a class, a year group, a phase group or a whole school community. A parent can request that their child is excused from collective worship and pupils who are excused must be supervised by the school. The school prospectus should refer to parents' right to withdrawal and outline the arrangements for pupils who are excused.

Religious education is separate from, and should not be confused with, collective worship, although an act of collective worship may reflect elements of any area of the curriculum. Time allocated to collective worship is distinctive from and additional to time given to religious education.

The Welsh Assembly Government has informed schools of changes in the legislation regarding acts of collective worship for students in post-16 settings. From February 2009 pupils in sixth forms had a right of withdrawal from collective worship.

The Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE) has already sent to schools guidelines on dealing with the new legislation in a way that acknowledges the growing independence of the post-16 learners, enables them to appreciate what collective worship is meant to be, and encourages them to make decisions that are informed and robust, and not merely emotive and superficial. It recognises that students in post-16 settings have much to gain from thoughtful and worthwhile acts of collective worship. It would therefore be a great loss if these opportunities were all given away lightly and without thought. Schools have a duty to promote the spiritual development of its pupils. It would be useful for schools to discuss with students the contribution collective worship makes to their own spiritual and personal development before exercising their right of withdrawal.

Further information can be obtained from:

'Supplementary guidance on inspecting collective worship in non-denominational schools' – Estyn – (June 2008). This and other Estyn publications are available on the Estyn website: www.estyn.gov.uk

If you have any further queries relating to this article, please contact Jeremy Morgan, Governor Support Unit in the first instance.

Education Update and Briefing Sessions

In a joint venture agreed between the Governor Support Unit (GSU) and the Vale School Governors' Association (VSGA), a new key termly event for governing bodies in the Vale was launched on the 1st December 2009.

The Education Update and Briefing Sessions provide an opportunity for:

- Bryan Jeffreys – Director of Learning & Development
- Paula Ham – Head of Service for Strategic Planning & Performance
- Lynette Jones – Head of Service for Achievement
- Caroline Rees – Head of Service for Additional Learning Needs

to brief and update all Chairs and Vice Chairs of school governing bodies in the Vale on current and forthcoming local and national initiatives.

The Panel also respond to questions submitted in advance by the VSGA Management Committee, Chairs and Vice Chairs of governing bodies.

Who can attend?

The Education Update and Briefing Sessions are open to attendance by the VSGA Management Committee, Chairs and Vice Chairs of governing bodies. If a Chair and/or Vice Chair are unable to attend, the Chair/GB can nominate a replacement from its governing body.

Please make every effort to ensure your governing body is represented at these key events.

The launch held in the Mount Sorrel Hotel, Barry was very successful with representation from governing bodies throughout the Vale. Comments and feedback from the launch event included:

- *"Good to meet the Heads of Service and to obtain an understanding of vision and objectives for the future."*
- *"Direct contact between governors and LEA Heads of Service and Director ensuring good communication with governing bodies"*
- *"This was a very promising start. If future sessions are as good, governors will not wish to miss them. Well done, an excellent initiative."*

The second event recently held on Tuesday 2nd February 2010 maintained the success of the launch event with nearly 50 attendees and very positive feedback with Heads of Service briefing governors on:

- *How do I know if my school is improving? - Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (MER)*
- *Review of Service Level Agreements (SLA's) in the Vale*
- *Vulnerable Groups, in particular 'Looked After Children'*

and fielded a wide range of questions on funding, effective management of schools, post 16 transport consultation.

The next Education Update and Briefing Session will be held in the Summer Term and is scheduled for:

Date: Tuesday 22 June 2010
Time: 6.30pm start
Venue: Mount Sorrel Hotel, Barry

Governing bodies may wish to include the 'Education Update and Briefing Sessions' as a standing agenda item at their full governing body meetings to discuss feedback from the sessions and to consider any questions they may wish to submit to the Panel at future sessions.

Jeremy Morgan
Governor Support Unit

Change to the delivery of New Governor Appointment Packs

During the Spring Term of 2010, the Governor Support Unit (GSU) changed the way it distributes 'New Governor Appointment Packs' to newly appointed governors of school governing bodies in the Vale.

Historically, the GSU has posted the packs to all new appointments direct to their home address. Following a review it has been identified that due to high postage costs this will no longer be viable so we would welcome the support of schools and governing bodies with the future distribution of these packs to new governors.

New procedure

For any new governor their 'New Governor Appointment Pack' will be sent direct to their school via the weekly internal 'blue bags' envopack. A separate letter will be sent by the GSU to the new governor

confirming their appointment and informing them that their 'New Governor Appointment Pack' will be ready to collect from the school after a given date.

Each pack sent to a school will be in a sealed clear plastic bag. An A4 sheet will be enclosed within the clear plastic bag, with the governor's details printed in large font on the A4 sheet which will be visible from the outside to make it easier for school staff to view.

We hope you will welcome and support our cost saving initiative. If you would like to discuss these new procedures, please do not hesitate to contact the GSU on 01446 709106/8.

Jeremy Morgan
Governor Support Unit



Colcot Primary receiving their award.

National Anti Bullying Week

In conjunction with the area's schools, the Vale of Glamorgan Council and partners are helping to highlight what can be done to prevent all kinds of bullying.

Organised by the Vale council's Pupil Support Service and the Children and Young People's Partnership, the first anti-bullying conference was held in The Hub in Barry and was supported by primary and secondary school staff along with representatives from health, the police, and voluntary organisations.

Vale Council Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning Cllr Tony Hampton said: "Tackling bullying in schools is a key priority for everyone. It is compulsory for schools to have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils, and to prevent all forms of bullying. The education authority fully supports these endeavours."

Held in conjunction with National Anti-Bullying Week, the conference consisted of presentations and workshops. Topics covered included the use of theatre to promote anti-bullying, cyberbullying (the theme for this year's national event); the Vale anti-bullying survey and how the NSPCC is working to combat the problem. Schools were able to follow up this work by booking the theatre company and taking part in the survey.

The workshop delivered by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services considered the effects of bullying. Victoria Primary School (Penarth) staff and pupils and David Davies of the Pupil Support Service showed how Social and Emotional Aspect of Learning materials can be used to good effect in schools. St Richard Gwyn staff and pupils, alongside the NSPCC, focused on the development of buddy mentoring. Sangeet Bhuller, of Wise Kids, looked at the role of technology in bullying.

Held in conjunction with the conference, and organised by the council's Primary Behaviour Improvement Team, was an anti-bullying poster competition, with cash prizes for winners, runners-up and School Councils.

Nicky Sturgess, of the Primary Behaviour Improvement Team, said: "Many thanks to all the pupils and staff who helped make the conference and the competition such a success."

Prizes presented by Cllr Hampton went to:

- KS1** Winner - Dinas Powys Infants School Council
Runner Up - Holton Primary
- KS2** Winner - Colcot Primary School Council
Runner Up - Tomos Hawksworth, St Bride's Major Church in Wales Primary
- KS3** Winner - Alex Hill, Llantwit Major Comprehensive
Runner Up - Oliver Bunce, Llantwit Major Comprehensive

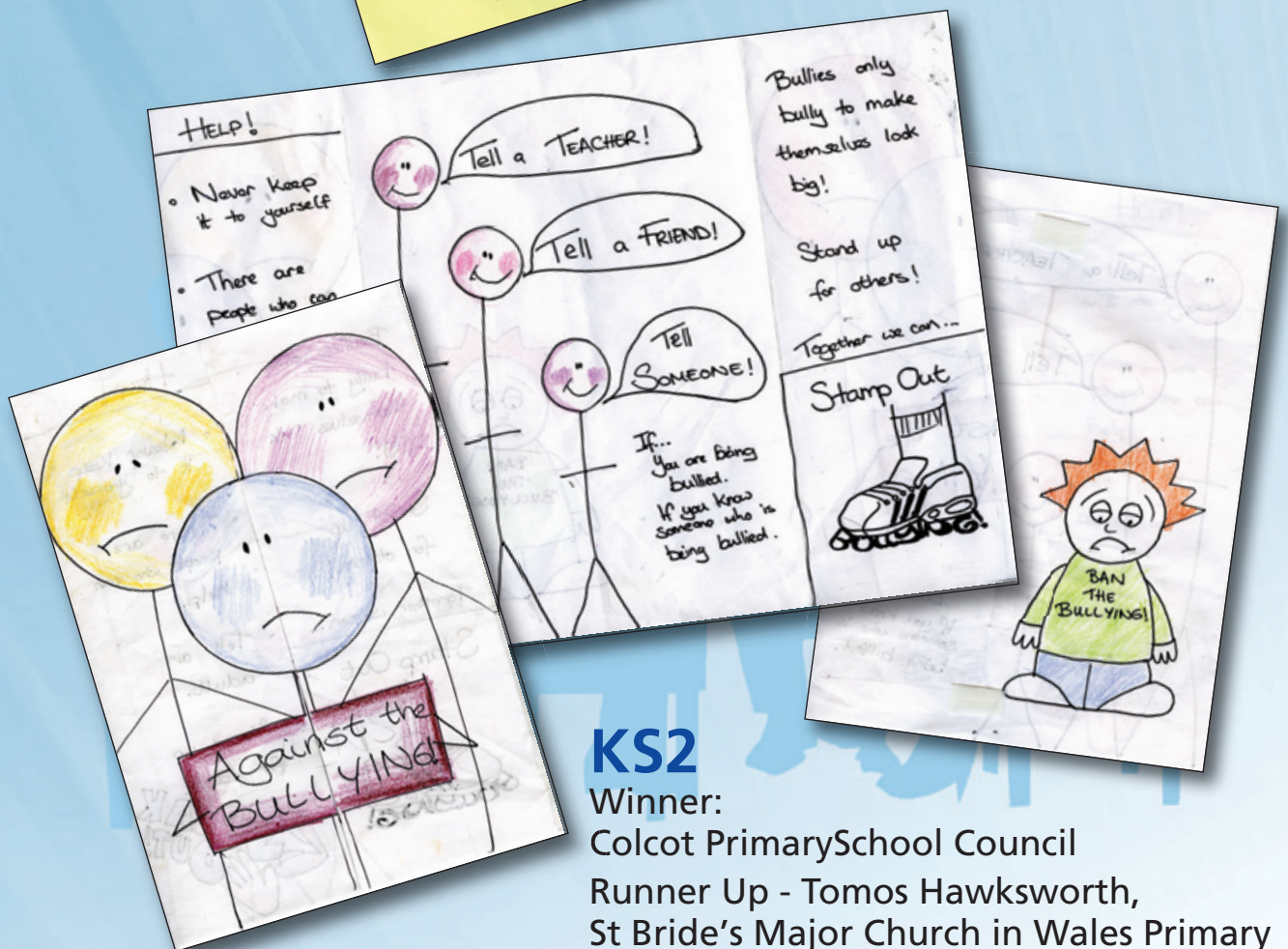
Nicky Sturgess

Primary Behaviour Support Team

Tel: 01446 709180 or email: nsturgess@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

KS1

Winner:
Dinas Powys Infant
School Council
Runner Up - Holton Primary



KS2

Winner:
Colcot Primary School Council
Runner Up - Tomos Hawksworth,
St Bride's Major Church in Wales Primary



Duke of Edinburgh Award in the Vale of Glamorgan

The Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award aims to provide an enjoyable, challenging and rewarding programme of personal development for young people aged 14-25, which is of the highest quality and widest reach. The ethos is to enable every young person of every background to take part in the programmes and succeed, regardless of any barriers.

The DofE is offered at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. There are 4 sections at each level – Volunteering, Physical, Skills and Expedition with an extra section (Residential) at Gold level.

In the Vale of Glamorgan the DofE is offered in most of the 8 LEA secondary schools. The schools have traditionally enjoyed great success with the Award; more than 1800 young people participated in the scheme in 2008/09 and completion rates are good.

At present the Gold level is offered in four schools including new units in the two Penarth comprehensive schools. There are 5 schools offering Bronze and 3 offering Silver. Stanwell School in Penarth has the highest participation with 144 young people registering in 2009/10 for Bronze and Silver and this is the only school in the Vale currently offering all three levels of the Award.

Young people will achieve a Duke of Edinburgh's Award if they show persistence, commitment and personal development over a period of time. Every activity must be successfully completed and assessed. The result is the world's leading achievement award for young people, recognised by employers and universities alike.

For more information relating to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme in the Vale please contact:

Dave Golding
Outdoor Education Adviser and Duke of Edinburgh Award Officer
Tel: 01446 709540
email: DMGolding@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Awards evening for Looked After Children (LAC)

In December the Children First Team organised their second Awards Evening for Looked After Children which took place in the Memorial Hall, Barry. It was another very successful evening!

The aim was to celebrate the successes of looked after children, for whom early life has invariably been particularly stressful. Research refers to education as being the passport to improving their life chances, hence our wish to promote their educational achievement. So often these children are coping with huge emotional baggage, loss, rejection not to mention changes of school and foster carers. To be surviving all this and succeeding in school is therefore worth celebrating!

Awards varied from success in external exams, improvement in effort, achievement or behaviour, coping with disability, achieving in sport despite physical disability or just coping against all odds. 53 children from the age of 5 to 18 were nominated for awards by foster carers, social workers, teachers, LAC nurses and 40 were present to receive them. Those who live too far away received them in school assemblies or privately, according to their wishes. All were given a certificate, a voucher and a gift.

The main hall was decorated with hundreds of balloons, courtesy of Dr Bob's Balloons and this year's red carpet was a big improvement on last year's apology for one! During the interval delicious cakes and refreshments were served. This enabled all the children's Corporate Parents i.e. social workers, nurses, teachers and Elected Members to meet and chat to the children and young people in person. The Lead Member for Children Councillor Dorothy Turner, the Leader of the Council Councillor Gordon Kemp, other Elected Members from the Corporate Parenting Panel, Bryan Jeffreys and Phil Evans, Director of Children's Services were amongst those present.

The evening was interspersed with musical items provided by students from Barry Comprehensive and Llantwit Major Schools. Their contribution considerably enhanced the ambiance and success of the evening and demonstrated what musical talent we have in our schools.

Our grateful thanks to the Children and Young People's Partnership for funding the event and without whose support the evening would not have been so successful. Thanks, too, to all the colleagues from Learning and Development and Children's Services who spent the evening with us.

Jenny Smith
Looked After Children Education Co-ordinator
Tel: 01446 704723 or Email: JSmith@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Annual Governor Conference

- "Partnership for Effectiveness - the next phase"

The Annual Governor Conference for Vale Governors will be held on Saturday 6th March 2010 at the Vale Hotel, Hensol from 8:45am to 1:00pm.

Feedback from governors on the Conference in previous years has been very positive and we encourage all governors to attend this key event in the Vale governor calendar.

Last year's very successful Conference considered the Welsh Assembly Government's School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) and this year's Conference focuses on the next phase of this theme "Partnership for Effectiveness".

Speakers

Roy Leighton

Roy is this year's main speaker. Roy is one of the most inspiring speakers in education today, not only because of the genuinely useful and practical nature of his advice for schools but also because he talks to an audience as real life, living, loving human beings. Roy has worked in education for many years in the UK, Europe and the Middle East with the whole range of sectors of the educational world from the disaffected to supremely able - that is for teachers as well as for the children!

Creativity, motivation, learning styles, self esteem and confidence, communication and value creation are all areas in which Roy excels and has successfully led hundreds of educational events from day-long INSET sessions, student workshops, parent evenings and conference addresses.

Roy will present "a wry look" at the need to work in partnership/collaborate, as well as the benefits, trials and tribulations of partnership working.

Professor David Egan

David is Professor of Education at the University of Wales Institute Cardiff, where he is Director of the Centre for Applied Education Research. During his career in education he has been successively a University researcher, senior research fellow and lecturer in History, a secondary school teacher, an Open University Tutor, a teacher trainer, Head of a University School of Education, a registered inspector of secondary schools and an educational researcher. David is currently the professional adviser to the SEF Project Board.

David will cover the "8-14 agenda" and the implications for schools and governors.

Clare Matthews and Julie Thompson

Clare is currently Acting Headteacher of St Brides C/W Primary School and Julie is currently Headteacher of Dinas Powys Infant School. Clare and Julie will give an overview of how professional learning communities (plc's) are working within their schools as part of the School Effectiveness Framework agenda.

How do I register to attend the Annual Governor Conference?

You can register for the event by phoning the Governor Support Unit on 01446 709106/8 or by emailing: jsparks@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or jermorgan@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Please make every effort to ensure your governing body is represented at this key event in the Vale calendar for school governors.

Jeremy Morgan
Governor Support Unit

The Maintained Schools (Partnership Agreements) (Wales) Regulations 2007

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) directed Local Authorities (LA) in Wales to enter into a partnership agreement with the governing bodies of each school maintained by the authority. Agreements are required for primary, secondary, nursery and special schools. The agreement must set out how a LEA and a governing body will carry out their respective functions in relation to a school.

Vale of Glamorgan LA/School Partnership Agreement

In the Vale a working group was established that consisted of representative Headteachers from each cluster group, the Diocesan Directors for Education from the Roman Catholic and Church in Wales sectors and a Vale School Governors' Association representative together with officers from the LEA.

The group has met regularly and agreed a format for the document. Progress was made bringing together the many areas that needed to be included and agreed upon which resulted in a meeting of the working group on Friday 5 February 2010 to finalise the Partnership Agreement.

The final version of the Partnership Agreement will be circulated to individual governing bodies to consider and sign off prior to Easter.

If you have any questions relating to Partnership Agreements, please do not hesitate to contact the Governor Support Unit on 01446 709106/8.

Jeremy Morgan
Governor Support Unit



Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg honoured as digital revolutionary



Local school named by Becta as Best Whole School in Wales at annual awards scheme celebrating technology excellence

Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg in Barry has been named as the region's top school when it comes to the use of technology at Becta's ICT Excellence Awards 2009.

The prestigious accolade of 'Best Whole School' is awarded to just one school in the region annually. The school beat off stiff competition to collect the award at Bristol's newest science venue, At-Bristol on Thursday 19 November 2009.

To win the award, teaching staff had to demonstrate they have successfully placed technology at the heart of both learning and wider school management. By helping to enhance teaching and bringing lessons to life, the school has shown clearly how technology makes a difference, not just in the classroom, but at home within the family, and across other school activities.

Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg wowed the judges with its collaboration with a local company to develop a high-tech system that allows teachers to assess, track, record and set targets for students to help them fulfil their potential.

Stephen Crowne, Chief Executive of Becta, said:

"We believe that integrating technology across the entire curriculum – not just using it in ICT lessons – is essential to higher achievement in schools and it makes lessons and learning more enjoyable and rewarding.

"The ICT Excellence Awards are a fantastic way to show just what can be achieved to boost the achievements of young people using technology. It is a great pleasure to reward the hard work of all schools that entered. Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg is a shining example of what can be done. Becta is committed to helping schools achieve similar results so that all learners have the opportunity to get the most from their time at school."

On winning the award, Dilwyn Owen, ICT Subject Leader at Bro Morgannwg School said:

"We are delighted to have won the award and it is an honour to be the first Welsh speaking school to have done so. The achievement of a national award confirms that our commitment and investment in ICT is having a huge impact on the opportunities we offer our pupils. It also reflects the dedication shown by all our staff in embracing ICT.

"We would like to thank all the teachers at Bro Morgannwg for their willingness to embrace ICT, the pupils for

pushing the boundaries and wanting more from ICT, the parents for their support in all that we have done and the governors for the financial guidance to make it all work."

Meera Syal, comedian, actress and star of Goodness Gracious Me, who presented the awards, said:

"It's amazing to see how all these different gadgets such as computers, whiteboards and digital video recorders are used by children and their teachers and what a difference it makes to their learning. When I was at school in Walsall in the 1970s, we didn't have anything like it. Lots of us have had to learn how to use technology as adults in our jobs, but these days kids are using it in everything they do – in and out of school. I've definitely been inspired by these awards to make sure I'm more up to date with the technology that's around – I only wish I could've had the same when I was at school."

The ICT Excellence Awards is an awards scheme open to all schools which aims to identify and reward excellence in Information & Communications Technology (ICT). The awards acknowledge UK schools approaching technology in outstanding or innovative ways. With the event in its fourth year, it is leading the way within the education system and is one of the most important and respected awards in the teaching calendar.

For information on Becta's Next Generation Learning campaign and details of how technology is transforming schools visit www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk

About Becta

Becta is the government agency leading the national drive to ensure the effective and innovative use of technology throughout learning. It is Becta's ambition to utilise the benefits of technology to create a more exciting, rewarding and successful experience for learners of all ages and abilities, enabling them to achieve their potential.

Becta in the Vale

For more information about Becta in the Vale please contact:

Jenny Hillier (Strategy Team Leader – Curriculum)
on 01446 709592 or email jhillier@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Innovation in Small Schools



Seven of the Council's smaller schools are currently participating in a project focusing on assessment for learning in Key Stage 2. The work is funded from a Welsh Assembly Government grant to support collaborative working between small schools. The grant enables teachers from schools where there are fewer teachers in KS2 the opportunities to work collaboratively in the way that working within a larger school offers more naturally.

The schools involved are Llancafarn Primary, Llanfair Primary, Llangan Primary, St Nicholas Primary, Wick and Marcross Primary, Ysgol Gwaun-y-Nant and Ysgol Iolo Morganwg. Teachers and headteachers from these schools have met regularly to plan and evaluate teaching and learning strategies and to review progress

against their action plans. They have also visited each other's schools to observe good practice and have participated in training events related to developing effective questioning for both teachers and pupils within the classroom.

The project involves a lead teacher from each school working with lead teachers from the other six schools as well as with the other KS2 teachers in their own school. This allows for collaborative work both within and between schools. The current project (2008 – 2010) builds on previous work undertaken through the grant which focused on assessment for learning the Foundation Phase (2005 – 2008).

Jane McCarthy

Curriculum Development Adviser (Literacy)

'Guidance for Governors' – Updates

The Governor Support Unit (GSU) is currently working on updating two key publications in the series. The 'Governing Body Committees' and 'Developing School Policies' booklets are being reviewed in light of the recent release of the key Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) publication 'A School Governor's Guide to the Law'.

The 'Governing Body Committees' booklet is a key GSU publication which was produced to establish a framework of best practice in relation to the establishment and maintenance of governing body committees in all Vale Schools. The 'Developing School Policies' booklet aims to help governing bodies with the key elements of the policy making process for which they are responsible.

Policies are one of the key tools by which the governing body carries out its responsibility for setting the strategic direction of the school. They provide the philosophy and principles which underpin the way things should be done by the school.

The GSU is aiming to complete their review of these publications and distribute updated versions shortly.

Jeremy Morgan
Governor Support Unit

Governor Training Sessions – Spring/Summer Term 2010

All governors will be receiving their Spring Term Governor Training Programme. Please see below details of those remaining courses scheduled.

If you would like to reserve a place on any of the training, please contact the Governor Support Unit on **01446 709106/8** or email governors@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Jeremy Morgan
Governor Support Unit

Date	Course	Time	Location
Sat 6 Mar	VSGA Annual Conference	8.45-1.00pm	Vale of Glamorgan Hotel
Wed 10 Mar	School Performance Data	7.00-9.00pm	Mount Sorrel Hotel, Barry
Tues 23 Mar	School Budgets/Finance	7.00-9.00pm	Mount Sorrel Hotel, Barry
Mon 14 April	Performance Management	6.30-8.00pm	Mount Sorrel Hotel, Barry
Wed 5 May	Health & Safety	7.00-9.00pm	Mount Sorrel Hotel, Barry
Tues 18 May	Looked After Children	7.00-9.00pm	Mount Sorrel Hotel, Barry
Mon 7 June	Special Educational Needs	7.00-9.00pm	Mount Sorrel Hotel, Barry
Tues 22 June	Education Update & Briefing Session (Chairs & Vice Chairs)	6.30pm	Mount Sorrel Hotel, Barry
Tues 29 June	Foundation Phase	7.00-9.00pm	Mount Sorrel Hotel, Barry
Mon 5 July	Managing Exclusion	7.00-9.00pm	Mount Sorrel Hotel, Barry

In association with the Vale of Glamorgan Council

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VSGA has an email address that you may contact us on.
It's VSGA@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

alternatively you can contact VSGA by post at:

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