



Vale School Governors' Association Cymdeithas Llywodraethwyr Ysgolion y Fro and Governor Support Unit

Newsletter

Note from the Chair

I went on your behalf to the rather grandly named National Education Conference for Wales in Cardiff in the middle of February. Lots of education professionals – Headteachers, Directors of Education, Educational Advisors, Welsh Assembly Officials and a smattering of governors. The topic of the hour was the perceived poor performance of schools in Wales particularly in relation to the PISA tests for young people in Year 11. Incidentally PISA stands for Programme for International Student Assessment – not many people know that.

The Minister announced a new grading system for schools and a series of eminent professors, Welsh Assembly Government Officers and educators made their suggestions for how the Welsh Education system can be made better and more fit for its purpose. The pivotal role of governors in their leadership in challenging school managers was reiterated by several of the speakers. Governors have a very important part to play if learners in Wales are to be as well prepared as possible for whatever the future may hold.

Given that St Richard Gwyn has just been through an inspection under the new Common Inspection Framework this emphasis on the importance of governors should not have surprised me. This is the third inspection I have been through since I became a secondary school governor and it was by far the most searching and perceptive, as well as being more gruelling for the staff. It is not enough for a governing body to say that you have acted as a "critical friend"; you need to give concrete examples – when and how and why? *What did you base your argument on? What effect did the final decision have on the learning in your school? How do you know?*

Of course, I am happy about the process because St Richard Gwyn has come out of it well, as you will be able to see on the Estyn website after April Fools Day. I hope you are as fortunate when the time comes. I would advise you to start your preparation now, if you haven't already.

Martin Price

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

Issue 22 Spring Term 2011

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

Anti Bullying Competition 2010

The Vale of Glamorgan Anti-Bullying Competition run by the Primary Behaviour Improvement Team winners were announced during Anti-Bullying week.

The competition this year was for the schools to write a rap with music and lyrics. The entrants were both imaginative and thought provoking - some had real star quality! The deserving winner of the Key Stage 1 Competition was Dinas Powys Infant School. The Key Stage 2 winner was St Joseph's R/C Primary School in Penarth. The School Council at High Street in Barry were the runners up.

Councillor Hampton and the Primary Behaviour Improvement Team visited all the winning schools to congratulate them. The children were presented with certificates and cash prizes to spend on items for their schools.

Many congratulations and thanks to all the staff and pupils who worked so hard to raise the profile of Anti-Bullying within the Vale by entering the competition.

Hilary Drew

Primary Behaviour Improvement Team

Catch Up Literacy and Numeracy Updates - Spring Term 2011

Catch Up Literacy and Catch Up Numeracy are one to one interventions supporting learners who struggle with literacy and numeracy.

Catch Up Literacy was introduced in the Vale in June 2002 with a pilot of 12 schools. To date, all schools across the authority have received training. 563 teachers and teaching assistants have accessed accredited training, accounting for nearly one third of all adults trained across Wales within the 17 authorities actively using Catch Up Literacy.

Vale schools participated in the Research and Development programme for Catch Up Numeracy in 2007. Since the roll out of the programme in July 2008, 132 adults have been trained to deliver the programme in 82% of schools in the Vale.

Catch Up Numeracy is now used across 12 local authorities in Wales.

Both interventions are accredited by the Open College Network and the Vale currently has over 400 adults who have participated in the accreditation process.

Over the last two years, approaching 1000 pupils have accessed the interventions with average numeracy gains of 12 months over 7 months of support and, in terms of Catch Up Literacy, one school sampled provided evidence of average gains of 22 months over 9 months of support.

Initially targeting pupils in primary schools, recent developments, across both initiatives, have led to increased usage in secondary schools with similar successes being reported.

Vale schools have worked systematically to embed the interventions within their provision maps. Recent developments have seen a central team of peripatetic teaching assistants supporting additional pupils within Vale schools.

Schools within the Vale are currently piloting a nationally recognised Award for Excellence for Catch Up Literacy/Numeracy whereby schools will be recognised as centres of excellence for the interventions.

A further development saw the first basic skills consortium meeting taking place at the beginning of February. This involved basic skills coordinators for the consortium and the associate adviser for numeracy in the Vale of Glamorgan meeting to develop expertise, share good practice and devise ways forward in terms of consistency in planning and delivery of literacy and numeracy initiatives, to include the Catch Up Programmes.

To date, the Basic Skills Coordinator for the Vale of Glamorgan has delivered cross-authority Catch Up Literacy training within the consortium and the associate adviser for numeracy is to deliver Catch Up Numeracy in the near future.

Invitations have been extended to and accepted by the other authorities to attend Catch Up Numeracy and Literacy User Group meetings and showcase events in the summer term. Cross-authority collaboration will also result in the development of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for staff in all five authorities. Further possibilities for joint working with regard to consortium training in other basic skills initiatives are also being explored.

Kathryn John

Associate Adviser for Numeracy

Tel: 01446 709862

email: kmjohn@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Correspondence with Governors

The Governor Support Unit (GSU) recently carried out a recent consultation with governors over their preferred method when receiving correspondence from the Governor Support Unit.

The GSU can save a significant amount of money, especially important in the current economic climate, if we can primarily email governors rather than use the postal method.

Following the consultation, there are now only just over 100 governors, out of nearly 1000, who have not declared their preferred method.

The options are:

1. English – Post	2. English – Email
3. Welsh – Post	4. Welsh Email

If you are a governor who has not confirmed which method you would prefer, please could you let the GSU know either by emailing governors@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or by phoning Janine on 01446 709107.

Governor Support Unit

Awards Evening for Looked After Children

The third Awards Evening for Looked After Children took place on November 25th 2010 in the Memorial Hall, Barry.

Gwenda Thomas AM, Deputy Minister for Social Care, accepted an invitation to attend from Councillor Dorothy Turner and addressed the audience and presented awards to the children.

As ever, the aim of the evening was to celebrate the successes of Vale of Glamorgan looked after children and those who live in the Vale but originate from other counties. All present had achieved in some way, despite coping with personal stresses and difficulties during the year.

Awards varied from success at GCSE, AS and A level, improvement in effort, achievement or behaviour, coping with disability, achieving in sport despite physical disability or just coping against all odds. 37 children from the age of 5 to 18 were nominated for awards by foster carers, social workers, teachers, LAC nurses and 27 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 medal.

The evening was interspersed with musical items provided by students from Barry Comprehensive, Cardinal Newman and St Richard Gwyn Schools. It was a privilege to listen to such talented and powerful voices! The street dancers from St Richard Gwyn enthralled the audience with their dazzling performance and were due to take part in auditions for Britain's Got Talent! Their contribution considerably enhanced the ambiance and success of the evening and demonstrated what talent we have in our schools.

Our grateful thanks to the Children and Young People's Partnership for funding the event. Thanks, too, to all Corporate Parents who attended: Elected Members and colleagues from Learning and Development and Children's Services.

Jenny Smith

Look After Children Education Co-Ordinator

Governor Support Unit Website

The Governor Support Unit has recently updated its website at:

www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/working/education_and_skills/schools/school_improvement/governor_support_unit.aspx

There is significantly more content with further pages to be added shortly.

Please review the pages and let us know if there is anything further you would like to see included or if there are any pages that may be improved.

Governor Support Unit

Management Committee Membership 2010-12

The Management Committee is comprised of 15 elected governors plus each Parent Governor Representative of the Primary & Secondary sector.

No.	Title	Initial	Surname	School
1	Cllr Mrs	M	Alexander	Gladstone Primary & High Street Primary
2	Dr	C	Brown	Wick & Marcross C/W Primary
3	Mr	N	Craggs	Gwenfo C/W Primary
4	Cllr Mr	C	Elmore	Holton Primary
5	Mrs	M	Gibbs	Cadoxton Nursery & Llantwit Major School
6	Mrs	S	Hodges	Ysgol Sant Baruc & Ysgol Gwaun y Nant
7	Mr	K	Ingram	Ashgrove School & Albert Primary
8	Cllr Mr	G	Kemp	Cowbridge Comprehensive & Rhws Primary
9	Mrs	A	Males	Cogan Primary & St Cyres Comprehensive
10	Mr	M	Mason	Llanilltud Fawr Primary
11	Dr	M	Price	St Richard Gwyn R/C School
12	Mr	P	Sampson	Cadoxton Primary
13	Mr	D	Treharne	Ysgol Gwaun y Nant
14	Cllr Mr	M	Wilson	Albert Primary & Victoria Primary
15	VACANCY			
PGR	Mr	P	Lewis	Cowbridge Comprehensive
PGR	Mr	S	Williams	Rhws Primary
Observer	Mrs	G	Evans	Ysgol Iolo Morganwg
Observer	Mr	G	Scott	High Street Primary

Vale youth group has award all 'rapped' up!

A group of young people from the Vale of Glamorgan has picked up a fantastic award for a bilingual rap they created to promote positive images of young people.

The rap and video, titled 'Choices/Dewisiadau' was declared overall winner for Wales in the U-News/Clic competition and awards, announced at the 21st celebratory event of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, held at the Senedd in Cardiff Bay at the end of November.

Representatives from the group were presented with their certificates and their prize – an iPad – by Deputy Minister for Children, Huw Lewis.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council's youth service and partners worked closely with the group of pupils from Ysgol Bro Morgannwg during the spring to produce the rap and video, to help highlight young people's rights in Wales. The aim was to promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and to raise awareness of the National Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales.

The rap was successfully launched by Children's Commissioner for Wales Keith Towler last July. Since then it's featured on local and national websites, has had more than 1,000 hits on YouTube and is being used as a training resource for young people and professionals across Wales.

Ve Van de Voorde, Youth Participation Officer, said "the young people created an excellent resource and it is fantastic to see that their hard work has been recognised. It has been great fun to work with them and they should be really proud of their achievements."

You can see the rap on the Vale of Glamorgan youth service's website here:

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/living/youth_service/youth_participation.aspx

Ve Van de Voorde
Youth Participation Officer

Service Level Agreements (SLA's) - Service Manager Roadshows

Three successful events in Penarth, Barry and Cowbridge were held during this half term which allowed Headteachers and Chairs of Governors to meet with Service Managers offering Service Level Agreements for Council Services traded with Schools. This forum allowed Headteachers and Governors the opportunity to ask specific questions about the SLA documentation and the services provided and in turn, gave managers a valuable opportunity to receive feedback. These events were part of the consultation process for the new SLA documentation which all schools wishing to purchase services must sign up to no later than 17th March 2011. Attendance overall was approximately 65% of all schools, with the Barry Cluster event being particularly well attended. We are grateful to Bryn Hafren and Cowbridge Comprehensive Schools for allowing us to host the events at their schools. Their hospitality really was appreciated.

Many of those attending expressed a desire for this type of event to take place more regularly. As a result, the Strategic Planning & Performance Service plans to trial this as an annual event in order to support the SLA performance measurement framework adopted by the SLA Standards Board. It is anticipated that these events will facilitate more meaningful communication between Service Managers and their School based customers and in turn lead to improvements in service delivery where identified.

Wendy Evans
Assistant Information Officer
Vale of Glamorgan Council

Time to Dine

- ✓ Providing a balanced nutritious meal
- ✓ Reduced fat, salt and sugar
- ✓ Fresh produce cooked on site
- ✓ No mechanically reclaimed or genetically modified food
- ✓ Follow Appetite for life nutritional guidelines
- ✓ All fish used is from sustainable waters - MSC

**All this from
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Healthy Harry

P.E.S.S. positively impacting on learning and teaching in the Vale

A recent review of the Physical Education and School Sport (P.E.S.S.) initiative in the Vale of Glamorgan, reported the support to schools, through the initiative continues to impact positively on learning and teaching.

Vale primary and secondary schools were visited by P.E.S.S. Consultant and Estyn Inspector, Pru Davis, between May and October 2010 to establish the impact of P.E.S.S. in the authority. The report found:

- Funding for P.E.S.S. in the Vale delivers good value for money;
- Is very well managed;
- Schools respect the work of the P.E.S.S. coordinator;
- An improvement in pupils' standards of achievement in P.E. at Key Stage 3
- Pupils' standards of achievement to be better at both Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 than previously, particularly in gymnastics and dance;
- The initiative had made a noticeable contribution to improving pupils' key and wider skills, with many teachers now being more aware of the potential of P.E. in developing pupils' Key Skills such as communication, thinking and pupils use of I.C.T to enhance their learning;
- P.E.S.S. in the Vale had a positive impact on transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 and that relationships between most partner primary and secondary schools have improved as a result of being involved in P.E.S.S. partnerships;
- Comprehensive continued professional development (CPD) opportunities offered through the initiative in the Vale has led to better levels of confidence in teaching P.E. in primary teachers;
- The leadership skills of primary P.E. subject leaders has been enhanced through their involvement with the initiative;
- Schools involved in the initiative in the Vale have successfully raised the profile of P.E. within their schools, with many now offering wider and better physical activity opportunities to their pupils.

The success of the P.E.S.S. initiative within the Vale is testament to the hard work of all those involved and the authority's continued commitment to support schools in raising pupil standards.

Lesley Dancey

P. E. & School Sport Co-ordinator, Vale of Glamorgan Council
Cydylnydd A. G. a Chwaraeon Ysgol, Cyngor Bro Morgannwg
ldancey@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Vale of Glamorgan Writers' Squad

Last term, over the course of two days, approximately 60 year 5/6 children from across the Vale of Glamorgan worked with Yvonne Murphy of Omidaze Education (www.omidaze.co.uk) to study, write and produce a condensed performance of Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet'.

The group represented 30 schools who had selected children with a particular interest or talent in writing to work together with the aim of encouraging and stimulating creativity through providing opportunities to work with other More Able and Talented pupils alongside established authors, poets, performers and directors.

The Writers' Squad meet each term in a range of venues and settings to stimulate writing. Each session shares expertise and builds in challenge to extend the pupils' writing skills. The squads are organised by the Vale of Glamorgan School Improvement Service and are run in conjunction with 'Academi' who fund half the cost of the writing squad events. There are active squads in most of the 22 authorities in Wales.

Each Writers' Squad session is both challenging and enjoyable and last term's was no exception. Under the expert guidance of Yvonne, the children were engaged in a variety of interactive activities aimed at unpicking the language of Shakespeare in order to explore and understand one of his best known and loved works.

Yvonne and the children proved that Shakespeare is accessible to both young and old and that rightly, it is no longer confined to study at G.C.S.E. and A level. Quicker than you can say 'O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?' the children unpicked iambic pentameter and used it to write and perform their own condensed version of the play.

The children ended the day exhausted and exhilarated, enthused and looking forward to the next Writers' Squad session. Indeed, the parent of one child contacted their child's school and the School Improvement Service to thank them for providing this opportunity, commenting that they rarely witnessed their child as stimulated and as effusive in their praise of a learning experience.

We hope that next term's session will continue to ignite the children's enthusiasm and to extend their writing talent and skills.

Rebecca Penn

The Nurturing Programme

What is it?

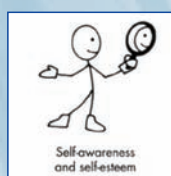
Founded in 1997, Family Links is an Oxford-based charity that is dedicated to promoting emotional wellbeing, relationship skills and positive behaviour through the 'Nurturing Programme'. The Nurturing Programme is a 10 week course offered to parents/carers which supports them to build on the skills they already have and suggest new ways of improving family life and managing the behaviour of children. It does this by offering simple, yet very effective, tools for managing and understanding emotions and behaviour.

It helps families from all social backgrounds whatever their level of need - it's equally effective for parents who are already confident and also as an intervention for those that would benefit from extra support.

Emotional Intelligence

Everyone is born with emotional intelligence - it's a capacity wired into the brain. How this capacity develops is dependant on a person's emotional literacy, and this depends on the kind of relationships they have, initially with the adults caring for them.

The Four Constructs - The Four Constructs are the 'Building Blocks' of the Nurturing Programme. All the approaches, strategies and ideas in the Nurturing Programme are based on these four key concepts:-



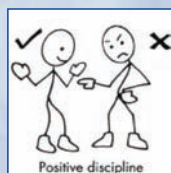
Self-awareness and self-esteem

The art of self-awareness is to know ourselves well - what we do and don't like. Nurturing ourselves by meeting our own needs helps to boost our self-esteem, making it easier for us to nurture others and particularly to help children develop their self-awareness and a healthy, positive self-esteem.



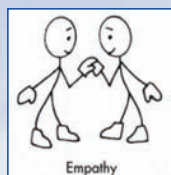
Appropriate expectations

Children grow up in different ways: physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally. They learn all the thousands of skills at different rates. What one child finds easy another child of the same age might find hard.



Positive discipline

All children need discipline to learn what behaviour is 'OK' and what is not. Positive discipline focuses on praise, rewarding their efforts, giving choices, negotiating and awarding responsibility. Negative discipline, on the other hand, uses punishment and fear; it is stressful for everyone.



Empathy

This is the cornerstone of the Nurturing Programme. Empathy is the ability to sense how someone else is feeling. We don't have to agree with what the other person thinks - just to be sensitive to the way they feel, and to accept it.

Where is it being held?

'The Nurturing Programme' is a new initiative that is successfully being delivered in some of our schools across the Vale of Glamorgan. To date we have worked with parents from High Street and Barry Island Primary Schools, presently we are at Colcot and Holton Road Primary Schools. By the end of March we will have reached a total of almost 40 families and hope to reach many more from other primary schools across the Vale in the future.

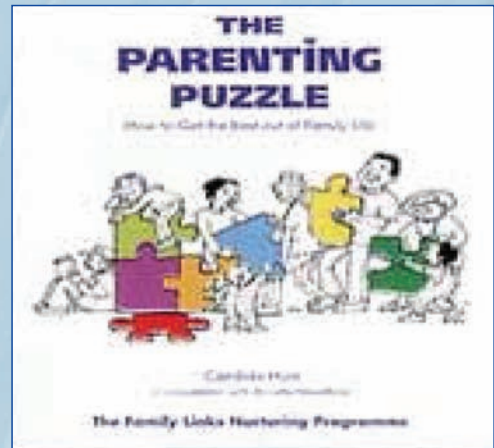
Besides this, through the Home School Links project the programme is offered to parents/carers of children at Cadoxton, Jenner Park, Ysgol Gwaun Y Nant and Oakfield and through Flying Start to all parents/carers of children aged 0-3 years through venues in the community - if you would like any further information to contact us on 01446 732180

Nurturing Ourselves

Each session starts with a warm smile and a comforting drink, this in itself is something that happens infrequently for many people and parents seem to enjoy the self-nurturing component of the programme which is promoted throughout the ten weeks.

By the end of the course, we find that parents really appreciate the time spent together and feel supported by their peers. Parents are reassured by coming to the group that many of them share similar problems; some comment that they have previously felt very 'isolated' in their parenting role.

Many mentioned the strong bonds that formed between them during the course which resulted in the planning of regular ongoing meetings between them.



Much of the programme content seems to be internalised and delivered within the home between sessions. The content was further strengthened by the parents' ability to refer to the associated handbook 'The Parenting Puzzle' (Hunt 2003). Each parent receives a copy of this book.

Parents have been very positive about the Programme.

They reported:

- an uplifting experience in a supportive atmosphere
- a better understanding of family relationships and parenting
- improved confidence and communication with their children
- more positive attitudes towards their children and families
- positive behaviour reinforcing techniques like Choices and Consequences were most successful

Many parents stated that their principal motivation for attending the Nurturing Programme was to regain a sense of control in their parental role and to find a better way of managing their children's behaviour. There was considerable evidence that through calmer thinking and new tools of parenting this had been achieved. The development of emotional literacy was powerfully experienced by most parents that completed all, or most of the course. For example identifying and managing emotions, self motivation and empathy, also relationship management.

A selection of parent's comments:-

"I enjoyed how relaxed I felt and useful learning about empathy."

"Tackling my problems are obvious when sitting and listening, this will be good for me."

"I liked learning about how to praise right."

"It's nice to hear about other parents who are in the same situation as me."

"Should be available to everyone – whole family now benefiting."

"Choices and Consequences are fab, they have been really helpful in the mornings!"

"I am becoming more aware of what my children feel and why they behave naughty sometimes!"

Head teachers comments:-

"Our families appreciated the sessions, felt empowered by them, and were motivated to continue the nurturing programme independently. Some parents run coffee mornings and support sessions weekly as a direct result of their training." Thank you!

Janet Hayward

Head teacher
Barry Island Primary

For further information, contact Sarah Richards
or Tracy Middleton on 01446 709483

Annual Governor Conference 2011 - Central South Consortium

2011 is the first year that the Vale joined its Central South Consortium partners, Caerphilly, Bridgend, Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taf in organising an Annual Governor Conference. The Conference was also supported by Governors Wales. The event was held on Saturday 5 March 2011 at ESIS, Ty Dysgu, Nantgarw, Treforest.

The focus of the Conference was 'Working in Partnership' with the aim to share information with school governors on successful examples of collaboration at school and Local Authority level and it was pleasing to see so many governors come together from each of the five authorities.

Upon arrival governors were met with an early morning coffee and a welcome and opening address from Carol Sayce, Chair of Governors Wales outlining the programme for the day.

Hilary Anthony, Director of Education, Bridgend County Borough Council delivered a keynote presentation on 'Improving Services for Young People through collaboration'. Hilary's presentation was well received and thought provoking, focusing on the changing landscape within local authorities and the need to work together to improve and develop services.

Following Hilary's presentation, governors split out into their chosen morning Workshop which covered:

- Federation and Collaboration
- The Role of School Governors in Pupil Participation
- 8-14 (Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3) Transition
- Education for Sustainable Development/Global Citizenship

This provided an opportunity to network with other governors from across the five authorities to exchange knowledge and experience of effective school governance.

After a break for lunch where governors were able to mix and share their experiences of the morning, the Minister for Education & Lifelong Learning, Leighton Andrews, AM arrived and delivered a keynote presentation on 'School Improvement'. In his presentation, the Minister highlighted the essential role and responsibility school governing bodies have in raising standards and performance across the board, and particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. The Minister fielded plenty of questions from all governors, including from Vale governors and it was welcomed that the Minister stayed later than planned to respond fully to all questions posed to him.

The afternoon continued with governors breaking out into their chosen afternoon Workshops. The Conference finished with a plenary where governors were able to pose questions to those involved with delivering presentations and workshops during the day.

It was felt that the event was a success; the speakers delivered interesting presentations and workshops on key issues and helped establish the day as a key annual event in the governor calendar within the Vale. We hope governors felt rewarded with an increased understanding of the points discussed and that they found the event worthwhile and enjoyable.

The GSU would like to thank all those governors who gave up their Saturday to attend the Conference and are grateful yet again for their continued support.



Above: (top to bottom)
Leighton Andrews AM
 Minister for Education & Lifelong Learning
Hilary Anthony
 Director of Education, Bridgend Council

Left: (top to bottom)
Hilary Anthony
 Director of Education,
 Bridgend Council
Carol Sayce
 Chair of Governors Wales
Mike Southcoat
 8-14 (Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3) Transition
 Workshop
Jane Harries
 The Role of School Governors in Pupil
 Participation Workshop

Language and Play - Links to the Foundation Phase Booklet

The Language and Play (LAP) Programme is a Welsh Assembly Government initiative designed to support parents and carers of children aged 0-3 in the development of their early language, literacy and play.

The programme aims to help parents explore many ways of playing with, listening and talking, singing songs and rhymes and introducing the love of books to their children.

The Language and Play programme is part of the Vale School Improvement Service and takes place in a number of schools, nurseries, playgroups and other community groups across the Vale of Glamorgan.

Early Years Practitioners, parent volunteers and community workers are trained to deliver the workshops. In order to support practitioners delivering the programme and for the parents/carers attending the sessions, the Language and Play Team has produced a comprehensive, innovative, attractive and informative guide to the programme and how it links to the Foundation Phase.

The booklet focuses on sharing important messages about how children learn through play and how parents and carers can support their children at home. It also contains a range of practical activities to be enjoyed together. Following the activities are links to the Foundation Phase, outlining some of the skills that children will begin to develop before starting nursery.

The booklet has been extremely well received since its recent inception by both practitioners and parents/carers. Pauline Rowland, Head teacher of Cogan Nursery School, commented:

"the booklet is really well laid out. There are useful tips and examples of how to develop early literacy and numeracy skills in a fun and stimulating way and yet with little or no cost. It is an excellent resource for both parents/carers and practitioners."

Comments from parents and carers –

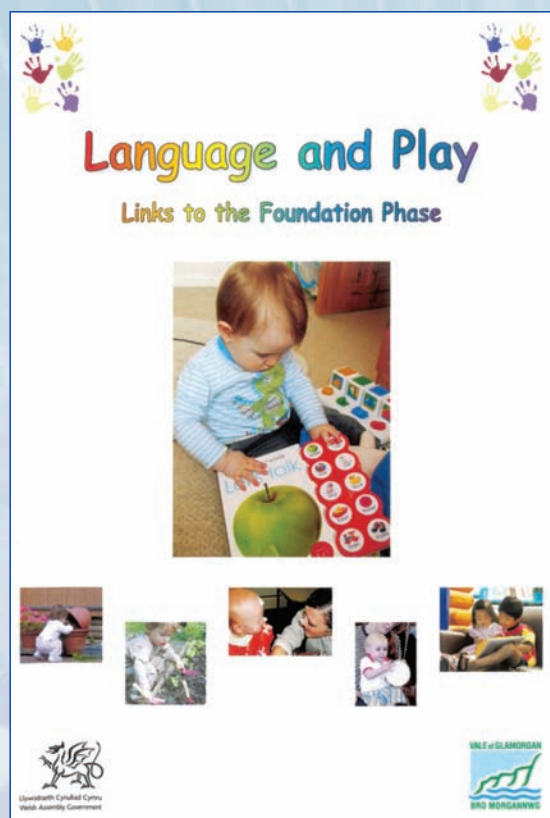
"I loved the booklet; it has really helped me to understand the Foundation Phase and what they do in school."

"I had never really thought about how much Thomas could learn by doing such simple activities."

"I loved the LAP/FP booklet; it makes so much sense and is easy to follow."

"The pictures and links were very helpful and easy to follow."

"I like helping my daughter at home and the booklet has given me lots of ideas and activities to try."



Debbie Collins, Sarah Richards and Tracy Middleton

Language and Play team
Vale of Glamorgan

Vale Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are a way of securing higher achievement and improved attainment in schools across Wales through teacher collaboration within, between and across schools. They provide an effective way of structuring Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to ensure that all participants can have their individual professional learning needs met. PLCs are built around a group of practitioners working together, reflecting on their practice, experimenting with ideas, researching new strategies and learning about themselves, all for the purpose of improving learner outcomes.

Following a period of consultation with headteachers, was agreed that the Vale of Glamorgan will develop 6 PLCs funded through the School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) grant.

The foci identified for this enquiry driven CPD are as follows:

- How can we effectively challenge more able and talented pupils?
- How can we ensure the wellbeing of more able and talented pupils?
- How to effectively build on the Foundation Phase experience to raise standards of reading in transition from Y2 to Y3?
- How to measure the impact of experiential learning on the standards of achievement, especially for boys?
- How can ICT be used to link Welsh medium and English medium schools in order to develop Welsh language in English medium schools and English language in Welsh medium schools?
- How to measure the impact of various learning and teaching strategies on wellbeing in the secondary classroom?

Currently there are 50 schools in this innovative and exciting programme. The evaluations and outcomes of these PLCs will be disseminated at a Central South Consortium Showcase event, over 2 days in the middle of March and will be shared on the Vale of Glamorgan Learning Portal.

First 'Sgwad Sgwennu' established in the Vale

Pupils from all five Welsh Medium Schools were invited to be part of the first 'Sgwad 'Sgwennu in the Vale. Gwyneth Glyn a prominent Welsh author, script writer and singer inspired the writing squad with her individual ideas to develop their own personal writing. She was thoroughly delighted with their enthusiastic approach and contributions throughout the day, especially their dialogues and humorous poems.

'It was such a pleasure to read individual pieces of work and to be a part of such an uplifting day full of creativity' said Ceryl Rowe – Athrawes Fro Welsh First Language and the 'Sgwad's co-ordinator in the Vale.

This is just the beginning of the journey- we are all looking forward to the next 'Sgwad, and with the National Eisteddfod visiting the Vale in 2012 we may be nurturing a future bard?

For more information about the 'Sgwad contact Menna Roberts (Welsh Adviser) 01446 709556 e-mail mjroberts@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk



In association with the Vale of Glamorgan Council

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alternatively you can contact VSGA by post at:

VSGA

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