



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

## Note from the Chair

I have been spending far too much time lately flying between North and South Wales, which sounds really glamorous if you haven't seen the size of the plane or the size of Anglesey Airport. This means I have been less active as a school governor.

Nevertheless, it was excellent to see so many of you at the Education Update & Briefing Session in the middle of June. We had a bumper turnout of fifty-five governors who had to face a rather eccentrically laid out Committee room because of a flood in the Council Chamber the day before.

We are very fortunate that the Senior Officers in Education at the Vale are so open about sharing their thinking and also in listening to feedback from the people who are at the sharp end, as governors are. This is a precious thing, which does not happen in most other Local Authorities in Wales, and I applaud them for it.

For example, we were the first group of people in the Vale to receive a presentation on the draft Medium Term Financial Plan for the next three years. We are now in a good position to see

what the reductions in funding and changes in Welsh Government policy will have on the overall budget and how that will translate into the schools we govern. The Plan is a draft, as was made clear on the night, and at the Budget Forum the following morning, where your representatives received a more detailed exposition and had more time to question the assumptions and numbers. Times are hard. Difficult decisions are going to be made, but we are all in this together. The document is going to be informed and shaped with input from the people who will have to deliver it in our schools.

May I wish you a good summer break and if you're looking for somewhere to go I should remind you that Anglesey is very nice this time of year. It's only an hour away, and you probably won't be stopped by the police for acting suspiciously, examining empty buildings in a small village, as I was last week.

**Martin Price**

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

## Issue 23 Summer 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

## Pupil Participation - Training Materials

### ***NEW Training materials on pupil participation now available!***

New training materials for staff, governors and pupils to help them develop pupil voice in schools in effective and fun ways are now available.

Why not take a look? Let us know how you have used the materials, and how they have helped to change things in your school! To access the materials go to:

<http://www.pupilvoicewales.org.uk/grown-ups/resources/training-modules-for-senior-leaders-governors-and-staff/>



# Education Update and Briefing Session – 14 June 2011

The 5th Education Update and Briefing Session was held in the evening of Tuesday 14 June in the Civic Offices, Barry.

## Background

In a joint venture agreed between the Governor Support Unit (GSU) and the Vale School Governors' Association (VSGA), a new key event for governing bodies in the Vale was launched in the Autumn term of 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.

The 14 June Session built on the interest and demand from Chairs to hold this event regularly with 55 governors from 40 out of the 60 schools in the Vale attending.

Heads of Service briefed governors on:

- School Improvement Service Update based on Education Minister's 20 Key Action Points
- Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2011/12 – 2014/15 – Learning & Development Directorate
- Update on funding for Learning Support Assistants in the Vale

In the current climate of change, collaboration, rising financial pressure as well as an increasing focus on raising standards in schools nationally, many key issues were shared and discussed by Heads of Service openly and candidly with governors.

The event moved on to the Heads of Service fielding numerous questions submitted in advance of the meeting based around:

- Funding per pupil in the Vale.
- Funding settlement 2011/12 and budget forecast for 2012/13 and 2013/14.
- Broadband charges in Schools across the Vale.
- Job Evaluation in Schools.
- Outdoor Sports Provision in a Vale Secondary School.

The Director, Bryan Jeffreys closed the event by talking about collaboration and the changing landscape of education in Wales with Welsh Government pushing for Joint Education Services.

Governor evaluations from the Session highlighted the success of the event with comments such as:

- These updates are very informative and necessary.
- Very good hearing the Director at the meeting and all speakers giving the Vale view honestly and openly.
- Useful updates on state of play – open and frank presentations.
- Excellent closing remarks.
- As usual excellent and informative.
- Difficult subjects and questions dealt with well.

We hope to see the few remaining schools with no governor representation at the event at our next Session in the autumn. Thank you to all those governors who made the effort to attend and help make the event a success.

**Jeremy Morgan**  
Governor Support Unit



## Award winning E-Learning module – Autism and Asperger’s syndrome

The Vale of Glamorgan Council in common with many other local authorities throughout the UK subscribes to the “Learning Pool” [www.learningpool.com](http://www.learningpool.com).

This is a web site which was originally set up as a government programme but is now a commercial entity designed to provide electronic learning or E-Learning to the public sector.

The advantages of E-Learning over more traditional approaches are that the modules to be studied can be accessed quickly and easily by staff from their own PCs at a time convenient to them. The learning only occupies the time taken to actually take in the topic and there is no need to gather a group together in a meeting room.

The Learning Pool, as the name suggests, is a pool of resources into which subscribing authorities can dip into and fish out the modules desired.

In addition subscribers are provided with software to create their own modules.

Here in the Vale of Glamorgan we have created a module to provide a basic awareness of Autism and Asperger’s syndrome for all staff. Studies suggest that the lives of children and adults with ASD may only improve if society has a better understanding of their condition. Raising awareness and

understanding of ASD is one of the key elements in ensuring that each individual’s needs are fully identified and assessed.

After completing the module, due to the interest that we received from other Councils we decided to publish it to the learning catalogue in order to share it with other members. Since publishing on the 28th of February it has been downloaded nearly 100 times by other councils across the UK.

To mark adult learners week at the end of May, Learning Pool held its first Community E-learning awards to thank contributors to the learning catalogue throughout the UK. The Vale was delighted to win the Best Original Modue category for this Autism Awareness module.

Learning Pool has also been in touch with regard to publishing the module as part of their Modern governor series providing E-Learning modules for school governors.

The Social Services Improvement Agency has also agreed to make the content available on their public web site so that this can be more generally accessed.

**Keith Ingram**

**Autism Project Manager**

**Vale of Glamorgan Council (and school governor)**

## 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





## Appetite for Life – Information for School Governors

### Q. What is Appetite for Life?

A. Appetite for Life sets out the actions required to improve the standards of food and drink provided in schools in Wales. Appetite for Life recommendations are split into nutrient based standards, food based standards and drinks standards, as follows:

- There are 14 nutrient based standards including energy.
- There are 11 food based standards.
- Separate drinks standards.

### Q. What is the difference between nutrient based standards and food based standards?

A. 14 Nutrient based standards have been set for food provided as a pupil's midday meal and will help to reduce intakes of fat, sugar and salt and increase vitamin and mineral intakes. They apply to an average school lunch over five consecutive school days, and relate to overall provision rather than individual consumption.

Food based standards have been set to apply to food served across the whole school day and will help to increase intakes of fruit, vegetables and oily fish and encourage healthier choices at meal times to form better eating habits for life.

### Q. Who is responsible for actually providing the food and drinks in schools?

A. The responsibility for the provision of a paid for school meals service, free school meals to eligible children and deciding the form of school meals lies with the local authority or school governing body where the function has been delegated.

Since April 2000 local authorities have delegated funding for school meals to all secondary schools and may also delegate funding for school meals to primary and special schools if they wish. Where a school has a delegated budget for meals, the school governing body takes on the same responsibility as the local authority in connection with their provision. Schools with delegated budgets are free to buy back into local authority catering services if the local authority agrees.

Through the school meal contract, responsibility for day to day provision may be discharged to the service provider, but the responsibility for the provision of school meals still remains with the local authority or the school governing body where the function has been delegated.

### Q. What are the recommendations for food provision in schools?

A. Circular No: 03/2003 'Nutritional Standards for School Lunches' provides advice on the current minimum compulsory standards for school lunches set out in the Education (Nutritional Standards for School Lunches) (Wales) regulations 2001.

Appetite for Life, published in November 2007, introduces more stringent nutritional standards which exceed the current minimum compulsory standards and applies to all food served whether it is provided by the school e.g. tuck shop/vending, in-house catering team, local authority catering services or an outside catering provider/contractor

Appetite for Life recommendations are not yet compulsory. However all schools should be working towards these recommendations in readiness for changes to legislation which will be in line with the Appetite for Life recommendations.

Since 2008 all local authorities in Wales have received grant funding, to assist them in working with their schools towards the Appetite for Life recommended standards.



## **Q. Who is responsible for ensuring the food provision meets food and nutrient based recommendations in Appetite for Life?**

A. Responsibility for ensuring foods and drinks served meet recommendations depends on who is responsible for provision within your school.

Where the food provision is provided by the local authority, the local authority is responsible for ensuring the food meets recommendations.

Where the food provision is provided by the school either "in-house" or by a contractor, the governing body are responsible for ensuring the food meets recommendations.

## **Q. As a governor, what do I need to be aware of in terms of providing food in schools?**

A. As a governor, you should think about the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Legal requirements regarding school food provision
- Becoming familiar with the most up to date recommendations in Appetite for Life
- Ensuring all food served across the school day meets or is working towards meeting the recommendations set out in Appetite for Life
- Requirements for undertaking nutritional analysis of the lunchtime food provision where the food is not provided by local authority caterers
- SMT and governors in the school need to understand their responsibilities in terms of implementing the recommendations and legal requirements
- In a school that has opted out of local authority catering provision, you should be aware of the support and guidance the school catering team may need to implement the recommendations
- Any contracted providers should be made aware of the Appetite for Life recommendations

## **Q. Where can I find out more information?**

A. The Appetite for Life Action Plan can be down loaded from the Welsh Assembly Government website and more information on the recommended guidelines for food, drink and nutrient based standards can be found on the school meal pages of the physical activity and nutrition network Wales website.

Key documents you may wish to download include:

- Draft implementation guidelines
- Nutritional analysis guide
- Food based standards posters
- Secondary school food based assessment tool

The Welsh National Healthy Schools Scheme (WNHSS) work involves supporting school based healthy eating initiatives, find out if your school is part of the scheme and see what work is being undertaken to support implementing Appetite for Life recommendations.

The national Food in Schools coordinator, Kerry Robinson, based at the WLGA provides support and advice to all school meal providers about implementing Appetite for Life recommendations. Email any queries to

[kerry.robinson@wlga.gov.uk](mailto:kerry.robinson@wlga.gov.uk)

Your local authority catering team should be able to provide information about how Appetite for Life is being implemented locally.

You may also be interested to read the findings of the Appetite for Life Action Research Project which details the importance of school governor support to help implement Appetite for Life recommendations at a school level. The report is available from the Welsh Assembly Government website:

<http://wales.gov.uk/about/aboutresearch/social/latestresearch/appetiteforlife/?lang=en>

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## **Fruit Tucker Trial**

At a recent meeting with the Vale Catering Service SNAG (School Nutritional Action Group) pupils from All Saints Primary School requested a fruit trial to include exotic fruits and that is exactly what they got! The ordinary fruits like apples and bananas were available along with physalis (cape gooseberry), passion fruit, blueberries and different types of melon. For every pupil trying a physalis a house point was awarded.

Pupils were asked to feel inside the fruit tucker box and try to guess the fruit within. This caused delight for some and fear for others not knowing what was inside the box! Feedback from the pupils will lead to some fruit changes to the primary menu.



# School Improvement - Raising Attainment in Numeracy

## Big Maths Programme

Following the very successful introduction of Big Writing in primary schools and Power Writing in secondary schools, the School Improvement Service is about to support the introduction of the Big Maths programme to all primary schools.

During this year, two teachers from twenty five primary schools will receive training to implement a whole school approach to raising standards in numeracy and the remaining schools will receive the training in the following year. The approach is known as Big Maths in primary schools and was founded by Ben Harding who now works with Andrell Associates.

All primary headteachers attended an initial training day with Ben Harding in late June to be familiarised with the programme, in order that they can support the implementation strategically within their own schools. This will be followed by four training days spread across the autumn and spring term, when teachers will be supported through the programme, encouraged to trial out the materials in class and will share developing practice. A final half day session will be planned for the summer term 2012 for the purpose of evaluation the impact of the programme on learner outcomes.

The Big Maths programme is an innovative approach to teaching maths designed to:

- Promote pupils' confidence and speed of thought
- Empower pupils as mathematicians, and
- Raise standards in numeracy

Big Maths follows the same broad principles that have made Big Writing so effective in raising standards in writing. Big Maths is a model of numeracy development that provides a fresh way of looking at primary mathematics.

Big Maths is based upon the principle that there are four core skills that lie at the heart of all numeracy. These core skills form the platform for virtually all other maths skills Counting, Learn its, Its nothing new, and Calculation affectionately known as CLIC.

The programme is clearly structured with a secure assessment process built into it, which will be used to monitor progress and measure improvements - along with other external measures.

Both the Big Writing and Big Maths programmes are in support of addressing the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities: Raising standards in literacy, and Raising standards in numeracy.

**John Commissiong**  
Curriculum Development Adviser (Numeracy)

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## SLA Standards Board

The Standards Board which works with schools and service managers to develop Service Level Agreement (SLA) documentation and improve SLA performance is seeking the assistance of Headteachers and Governors. The Council has been pleased with the high number of schools choosing once again to purchase Council services this year. Every Vale of Glamorgan school signed up to at least one SLA, and most have chosen to purchase the majority of services offered. A review of the performance of the SLA's offered remains ongoing however. The main responsibility of the Board is to monitor the performance of services delivered to schools throughout the term of the agreements and resolve performance issues. This can only succeed if schools ensure that they keep the Standards Board informed of any issues they have experienced with SLA performance at their school.

The individual cluster representatives on the Board are required to prepare a termly report on each services' performance which is assessed against the agreements. The content of these reports and the development of future SLA documentation are fed by representations from individual service managers and feedback from schools via cluster meetings. Each cluster has nominated a representative; Mr Julian Davis, Cowbridge Comprehensive School for the rural Vale cluster, Mr Mark Middlemiss from Palmerston Primary School for the Barry Cluster and Mr Huw Jones, Albert Primary School from the Penarth cluster.

If you would like an issue relating to service performance to be brought to the attention of the Board, or you would like to discuss the council's SLA's in more detail please either contact your cluster representative or **Lisa Lewis, Strategic Planning & Performance Officer** ([LLewis@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:LLewis@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)) telephone number 01446 709899.



## Tir na n-Og Awards

St Andrew's Primary School, Dinas Powys was one of three schools nationally who took part in a pilot project in conjunction with The Tir na n-Og Awards. The Tir na n-Og Awards are held annually and are sponsored by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILP) and the Welsh Books Council (WBC). The awards are held with the intention of raising the standard of children's and young people's books published by Welsh authors during the year, and to encourage the buying and reading of these good quality books. Books are placed into one of three categories; Best English-language book of the year with an authentic Welsh background (fiction or non-fiction); Welsh-language books, primary sector and Welsh-language books, secondary sector. A winner from each category is selected by a panel made up of representatives from CILP and WBC.

This year, for the first time, schools were invited to become involved by holding their own competition to select their favourite book from one of the three categories. Year 6 at St Andrew's Primary led by their teacher and Deputy Headteacher, Mr Duncan Mottram, worked very hard to read all four shortlisted titles in the English-language category. In

order to explore the books and support the children in making an informed decision, Mr Mottram devised many engaging activities including debates, biographies, comic strips and writing alternative endings. The children produced their own very thorough evaluation and voting system and held a secret ballot to select the winner of their own St Andrew's Primary Tir na n-Og Award. Their award was presented to Dan Anthony, author of 'Rugby Zombies'. As a local Penarth resident, Dan was particularly delighted to be voted their winner.

Dan Anthony spent an afternoon with the year 6 children, sharing his experiences and working alongside them to help them to produce the beginnings of their very own short stories.

The school's involvement in the pilot project was deemed a great success and it is hoped that their feedback will encourage a national launch of the Tir na n-Og Book Shadowing Awards next year.

Thank you to Headteacher, Mrs Sue Jordan for agreeing to allow the school to take part in the project and to Mr Mottram and his class for all their hard work and enthusiasm.

**Rebecca Penn**

**Associate Adviser for Literacy**

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## School Sport Survey

Your help is need for the School Sport Survey, 2011!

You have been notified that Sport Wales is conducting an online survey for children, young people and teachers to measure the participation and provision in school sport. This online survey takes approximately 20 minutes to complete and is live for the whole of the summer term.

As an Education Authority and Sports & leisure Service the data from the survey will help track trends in PE and school sport, and provide a base from which to shape sports policy and practice for the future. Areas influenced by the Active Young People Survey and PE Provision Survey (the predecessors of this survey) influenced the amount of funding invested in areas such as the 5x60 officers, PESS coordinator and a whole raft of funding for sport delivery.

Well-being has become an increasingly important policy area and the School Sport Survey will assist schools to evidence how their PE and school sport contributes to the well-being of pupils.

The School Sport Survey through different questionnaires is targeting young people years 7 to 11, children years 3 to 6 (which will explore their participation and motivation in school and community sport), and teachers exploring the provision of PE and school sport. We expect to obtain valuable local authority-level data and schools (who provide a sufficient sample to report on) will receive their own report in October/November 2011.

Sport Wales is offering schools the opportunity to be entered into a prize draw to receive £1,000 of sports equipment if they complete the School Sport Survey.

In total, there will be eight prizes of £1,000. Two prizes per each regional education consortia. Schools will be notified if they have been successful by 12th September 2011.

For further information on the School Sport Survey, please see:

[www.schoolsportsurvey.org.uk](http://www.schoolsportsurvey.org.uk). Should you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact: Sport Wales, who would be happy to assist:

**Neil Emberton, Senior Regional Officer, Sport Wales on 02920 2033 8265 [neil.emberton@sportwales.org.uk](mailto:neil.emberton@sportwales.org.uk);**

**Mark Davies CYPP Manager 01446 731628;**

**Lesley Dancey PESS Coordinator 01446 709735; Karen Davies Sport and Play Development Manager 01446 704793. [www.schoolsportsurvey.org.uk](http://www.schoolsportsurvey.org.uk)**



# Didn't they do well!

The fantastic achievements of our Vale youngsters have again been a cause for celebration in a popular Vale of Glamorgan Council recycling project.

While unforeseen circumstances have meant that the celebrations have taken a while coming, the youngster's results still speak for themselves!

Nearly three quarters of Vale schools collected Christmas cards for recycling earlier in the year as part of the Council project. The initiative has been running successfully for many years thanks to community support and the schools' enthusiasm, and 2011 has been no exception.

Holton Primary School from Barry took the top spot in the primary school category, their 59,156 cards collected averaging out at 125 cards for each pupil in the school. Two Penarth schools, Stanwell and Ashgrove, achieved top honours by winning the secondary and special schools slots.

Individual winners again shone this year by collecting huge amounts of cards, and showed just how keen our local young people are on recycling.

Jack Powell from Stanwell School scooped the secondary school card champion's prize, while a total of 41,300 cards collected gained top honours for Josh Hurley at Ashgrove School.

Georgia Lees of Barry showed not only a fantastic commitment to recycling by collecting over 48,000 cards, but in a really unselfish gesture happily donated her winners prize to her primary school as she has secured top honours in the project before.

Councillor Geoff Cox, Cabinet Member for Visible and Building Services, expressed his delight at the youngsters' achievements when he said "This project is a success because of a great shared effort. The pupils first and foremost, but also parents and guardians, grandparents, neighbours and the community generally." Councillor Cox finished by saying "The Council has an initiative called 'What's in your bin?' that encourages us all to do what we can to reduce, reuse and recycle our rubbish. I would like to thank everybody involved in this recycling project for such sterling work, it is an excellent example of what can be achieved with the appropriate effort and determination."

For more information about waste management & cleansing in the Vale of Glamorgan either telephone: 01446 700111

email: [visible@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:visible@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

or visit the website at [www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/recycle](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/recycle)

**Sam Harrison**  
Waste Awareness Officer



## In association with the Vale of Glamorgan Council

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VSGA has an email address that you may contact us on.  
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