



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

## Note from the Chair

Good to see so many of you at the Conference for Governors from all parts of the Consortium who met at the beginning of March at Ty Dysgu in Nangarw.

I was particularly impressed by a workshop led by Professor David Egan on the link between poverty and achievement in schools in Wales. He gave a masterful explanation of the scale of the problem and its historical roots. But he also gave some pointers about what we as Governors can do about it.

His three conclusions:

- n Good schools can make a real difference
- n Schools cannot do it alone. They need better engagement of families and to encourage better parenting skills.
- n We need to get communities interested and engaged with their schools. Society needs to value education.

Governors have a vital role here as leaders in education. Too many schools are guilty of taking the "low-hanging fruit." There are children born with all the advantages that stable well-

motivated employed families can bring. They are likely to do well wherever they are educated. There are others for whom even getting to school is a struggle let alone having a quiet place to do homework or an iPad to do their research at home.

And we should not be complacent and think that the affluent leafy Vale of Glamorgan has no need to worry about poverty which is elsewhere in Wales. The food banks here are as busy as anywhere. What is your school doing to help young learners who are growing up in poverty? Is there somewhere safe and quiet they can do homework after school? What measures have you taken to make sure everybody who can is claiming their one hot meal of the day?

It is a damning statistic that only 20% of children in Wales receiving free school meals get 5 good GCSE's, when those not on free school meals have a 50% chance. In the Vale the figures are 19% and 56%. What are you in your school doing to change that?

**Martin Price**

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

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**Special points of interest:**

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

**VSGA was set up to:**

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

**In association with the  
Vale of Glamorgan Council's**

Governor Support Unit

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

It's [VSGA@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:VSGA@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

alternatively you can contact VSGA by post at:

**VSGA**

**Governor Support Unit**

**Learning & Development Dept.**

**Vale of Glamorgan Council**

**Provincial House, Kendrick Road**

**Barry CF62 8BF**



# Current Updates within the Department of Learning and Skills

## New appointment - Lead Professional Officer for School Improvement

Meryl Plummer has been appointed as the new Lead Professional Officer for School Improvement.

Meryl previously held a senior post in the School Improvement Service and will return to the Vale from the Central South Consortium where she is currently a Senior System Leader.

Meryl will be an asset to the new School Improvement and Inclusion Service and to the Directorate as a whole. Her skills, experience and professional reputation are exemplary and will add enormous value to the work with schools and all children and young people in the Authority.

Schools will be notified of the date when Meryl takes up her new post.

## Restructure - The School Improvement and Inclusion Service

The School Improvement Service and Pupil Support Service have been restructured and the new amalgamated service will be called the School Improvement and Inclusion Service.

Lynette Jones, as Head of Service will lead the new service, supported by David Davies as Lead Professional Officer for Inclusion and Meryl Plummer as Lead Professional Officer for School Improvement. Both Officers will lead and manage professional teams, within their respective disciplines as indicated below.

The Service will comprise of five teams as follows:

### 1. Complex Needs Assessment Service

The service manages the statutory assessment and review of pupils with special educational needs and ensures that procedures are followed in accordance with the statutory requirements and regulations. The service also manages and provides advice and training to schools in respect of Pupil Exclusion procedures and ensures that procedures are followed in accordance with the statutory requirements.

### 2. Educational Psychology Service

The Educational Psychology Service is a professional support service provided by the Local Authority to enable it to meet its statutory obligations under the Children's Act 1996 and the SEN and Disability Act 2001. The service is delivered through a consultation model which involves working with concerned adults (teachers, parents) to help create solutions to problems they have identified, in helping children to learn and in fostering their welfare and development.

### 3. Social Inclusion and Learning Support Service

The service is made up of two teams:

Safeguarding, Learning Support and Wellbeing Team works in partnership with schools, parents and children and young people to ensure the social and emotional wellbeing of all pupils.

Behaviour, Attendance and Looked After Children Team

The function of the Behaviour and Attendance Service is to work in partnership with parents, teaching staff and partner agencies to ensure positive behaviour at school and school attendance.

### 4. School Improvement Service

The School Improvement Service manages the statutory school improvement functions of challenge, monitor, support and intervention. This service is delivered in inverse proportion to the success of the school. This part of the service is delivered via the Joint Education Service (JES) of the Central South Consortium.

A team of System Leaders (SL) delivers a range of functions to our schools, overseen by a Senior System Leader (SSL) located in the JES and a Basic Skills Support Team located within the School Improvement and Inclusion Service in Provincial House in Barry.

The Lead Officer for School Improvement delivers a JES facing role, works closely with the Senior System Leader who delivers a client facing function to the Lead Officer for School Improvement and Head of Service.

### 5. Governor Support and Project Management Service

The team provides support and guidance to our school governing bodies across the Authority. It delivers an annual training programme, guidance booklets, newsletters, facilitates the appointment of senior school leaders, recruit new governors, maintain a governors data base, deals with complaints and project manage cross cutting service projects and initiatives.

The team provides a detailed overview of the work of schools and their governing bodies as well as valuable guidance and support for the Head of Service and other senior officers in the Council when implementing policy and proposed practice.



## Goodbye Yellow Brick Road

2013 has marked the end of a recycling scheme for schools that has enjoyed great success, and with this in mind we'd like to say a big 'thank you' for the support and take a look back.

Between 2003 and 2010 the Council promoted The Yellow Woods Challenge, a national yellow pages recycling scheme, in Vale schools. This saw schools enthusiastically collecting large quantities of yellow pages at a time when the directories could not be recycled kerbside or the sheer volume and bulkiness of them caused problems for our recycling vehicles. During this time we would have schools collecting some 27 directories per pupil and winning national competitions, with the national project mascot 'Kirk' (a 6 foot woodland creature!) becoming a firm favourite in Vale schools. Put simply, if you laid down all the yellow pages collected in these years you'd make a yellow brick road that Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz would be proud of!

The national scheme folded in 2010, and by then Vale residents could recycle their yellow pages in our kerbside scheme. But we were left with a dilemma, as schools were still keen to be involved and we were aware that the scheme helped achieve other objectives such as those for Eco-Schools and ESDGC. So, for the last 2 years, we have tried a compromise whereby pupils recycled the heavy directory at home, and simply took the cover of the yellow pages into school.

But the amount of covers being taken into schools barely reached double figures, and the number of schools participating dropped off considerably.

As Councillor Rob Curtis, Cabinet Member for the Environment and Visible Services explained "I think that this scheme has simply come to the end of its natural life. Positive developments in recycling over time has meant that we are now able to recycle more materials and so easily at home."



Rob continued "Also products, and the way we use them, have changed too. We're probably more likely to look phone numbers up on line now and so might not keep a directory at home. We now encourage residents to put their old copies of the yellow pages in their weekly co-mingled recycling service."

Sam Harrison, Waste Awareness Officer, Waste Management and Cleansing

For further information please either telephone:

**01446 700111**

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

## New Guidance Regarding Staff Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures

Please see the link below to this new Welsh Government circular, it contains the guidance for staff disciplinary and dismissal procedures for schools with model procedure, flow chart and model disciplinary letters.

**English** - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/staff-disciplinary-and-dismissal/?lang=en>

**Welsh** - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/staff-disciplinary-and-dismissal/?skip=1&lang=cy>

**John Sparks**  
Head of Governor Support



## Nurture Groups

The Educational Psychology Service and the Behaviour Support Team were asked to collaboratively introduce the philosophy and practice of nurturing principles into the schools of the Vale of Glamorgan.

Nurture Groups originated in inner London in 1969, as a response to the increasing number of children entering school with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, resulting from early trauma and attachment difficulties. The aim of the Nurture Group intervention is to create the world of earliest childhood; through basic and essential learning experiences normally gained in the first three years of life. This supports the child to be ready to learn.

Research has indicated 'that nurture groups are extremely successful, not only in sustaining children in mainstream classes but also in making a powerful and positive impact on other children and teachers in the school' (Arnold, Boyd and Cooper, 2001).

Information about the Nurture Group training was given to all Head Teachers as a means of addressing the increasing number of children entering their schools with early trauma and attachment difficulties.

A successful Nurture Group training course was organised in November 2012 at Romilly School and 19 staff attended including; Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers, Teachers and Learning Support Assistants. To date the number of schools who have developed a Nurture Group or are in the process of setting up a Nurture Group are 8 including 7 Primary Schools and 1 Comprehensive School.

The Educational Psychology Service and the Behaviour Support Team are providing on-going support to empower schools to establish and further develop Nurture Groups. This is achieved by using resources, assessment tools and guidance through the process in order to facilitate good practice.

The DCSF (2007), highlight that Nurture Groups can enhance school improvement through; better attendance and behaviour which leads to more effective learning and improved academic results. The social, emotional and behavioural skills developed within the Nurture Groups are vital in terms of ensuring the wellbeing of our most vulnerable pupils.

Another training course is planned (February 25th) entitled 'How to Create a Nurturing Classroom' which aims to introduce the Nurturing Principles into daily classroom practice.

For further information contact

**Hilary Drew and Siân Winckle, Pupil Support Service.**

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## Management Committee Membership 2012-14

The Management Committee is comprised of 15 elected governors plus the two Parent Governor Representatives (one each from the Primary and Secondary sectors).

No.	Title	Initial	Surname	School
1	Mr	N	Craggs	Gwenfo C/W Primary
2	Cllr Mr	C	Elmore	Barry Comp & Holton Primary
3	Mrs	M	Gibbs	Llantwit Major Comp & Romilly Primary
4	Mrs	S	Hodges	Ysgol Gwaun y Nant & Ysgol Sant Baruc
5	Mr	P	Lewis	Cowbridge Comp
5	Mrs	A	Males	Cogan Primary & St Cyres Comp
7	Mr	M	Mason	Llanilltud Fawr Prim & Ysgol Dewi Sant
8	Dr	M	Price	St Richard Gwyn R/C High
9	Mrs	C	Roach	Llangan Primary
10	Mr	P	Sampson	Cadoxton Primary
11	Mr	D	Treharne	Llansannor C/W Prim & Ysgol Gwaun y Nant
12	Mr	S	Williams	Rhws Primary
13	VACANCY			
14	VACANCY			
15	VACANCY			
PGR - Prim	Mr	L	Kellaway	Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg/Ysgol Nant Talwg
PGR - Sec	Dr	C	Brown	Llantwit Major Comprehensive

Any governors interested in becoming a member of the VSGA Management Committee should contact John Sparks by email at [JSparks@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:JSparks@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)



# An update from HR

## Safeguarding/Safer recruitment

In the last edition we highlighted the work which HR have carried out to develop a Safer Recruitment policy to recommend to schools.

The policy has now been finalised and issued to all schools with our recommendation that the policy is accepted by Governors at your next full Governing Body meeting. Schools have been provided with the appropriate form to complete and return to HR to inform us that the policy has been adopted.

The policy outlines the standards in relation to safeguarding pre-employment checks including an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (with barring) and satisfactory references as well as other safeguarding checks including checking any gaps in employment at interview and verifying registration with the GTCW for Teachers. In addition the requirement for other pre-employment checks including satisfactory medical assessment and confirming right to work in the United Kingdom must be undertaken. Schools must allow sufficient time for these checks to be undertaken in their recruitment schedule before start date. The only exception to this is if non appointment would result in possible safeguarding/safety issues for pupils and in this case there is a Risk Assessment process to be followed. The policy applies to employees, volunteers, agency workers and contractors.

On appointment, you will need to ensure that all employees, volunteers and agency workers are aware of your School behaviour policies, Safeguarding arrangements including the lead safeguarding officer in the school and any other relevant policy/procedures in the school that promotes the safety of pupils.

There is an additional Training course for Governors on March 14th and we would strongly recommend that you attend. If you haven't already booked a place, can you please contact Janine Hoare on 01446 709107. Training Courses for school staff who are involved in the recruitment and selection process have been arranged for March.

The policy will be supported by a guidance document which will be issued to schools very shortly.

## Recruitment and Selection

In addition to the Safer Recruitment policy Schools are also recommended to adopt the Vales Recruitment Policy which incorporates good practice.

### Disclosure and Barring Service

In December the Criminal Records Bureau merged with the Independent Safeguarding Authority to become the Disclosure and Barring Service. The change does not affect your schools obligation to request an Enhanced DBS disclosure (including a check against the relevant barring list) and this will continue via the current DBS application form process.

Further changes are expected this year - the first is the introduction of an on-line update service for DBS checks, which is due in spring 2013. Further information on this will be provided when available.

## School Teachers Pay and Conditions

There are proposals for changes to the salary progression arrangements for Teachers in line with the recommendations from the STRB 21st report. We are waiting for further information from Department for Education and will confirm details to Head teachers and Governors as soon as this is available.

If you would like information on the proposals please see:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/careers/payandpensions/a00203870/strb-remit-21st-report>

## Revised Guidance on School Disciplinary Procedures

We have recently received updated guidance from Welsh Government and are currently reviewing this in order to draft a new Disciplinary Policy/Procedure for Schools. We will consult on this with Trade Unions in due course and once final version is available will send to Schools to recommend adoption by Governing Bodies. In the meantime, we School's should continue to use the existing Vale policy.

The revised guidance can be found at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/staff-disciplinary-and-dismissal/?lang=en>



## Horsemeat Issues

Beef is off the menu in schools as a precaution. Previous tests had ruled out equine DNA in beef supplied by Welsh Bros of Newport. However, on Wednesday 27 February 2013, one batch of minced beef had a positive result for equine DNA and for this reason, beef has been removed for the short term whilst we work closely with the supplier to ensure standards are raised and increased monitoring takes place in the future. This is seen to be an isolated incident as the supplier is continuing to send minced beef for testing and every other result has proved negative.

Welsh Bros has been the supplier of quality meats to the Vale of Glamorgan for more than 22 years. It is important to note that this is not a food safety issue but a food fraud issue. More rigorous labeling will need to be in place by suppliers in the future.

## Albert Road – No Interruption to Service

During the very challenging time staff and pupils were faced with from Albert Road School prior to Christmas, it is with a great sense of achievement that the school meals catering service were able to supply staff and pupils with a full lunch service every day without exception!

A huge thank you to all staff who were involved in the transportation and service provision at this time.

When staff and pupils returned to school prior to the Christmas holidays, a traditional Christmas lunch was served and enjoyed by all who attended.

*Well done to the team!*

**Carole Tyley**  
Catering Manager

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## Team Albert

I am pleased to be writing to you to confirm that 'Team Albert' will be returning to its rightful home on Thursday 20th December. The past couple of weeks have been extremely challenging for one and all, however we have all survived! This has been achieved by your unwavering support, the outstanding behaviour of the children and the professionalism of all the staff. In addition, Albert has seen the true community spirit from parent/carer volunteers co-ordinated by SOAP and our friends at Tabernacle who have extended a hand of friendship enabling us to call their home Albert Primary during our time in the wilderness.

Our evacuation to Cogan Leisure Centre and Tabernacle has enabled the children to experience a multitude of sports, arts and craft, team building and most importantly the opportunity to perform the Christmas productions. This has ensured that the children were still able to enjoy a very important time in the primary school calendar year.

Whilst we have been away Albert life has continued and I am pleased to inform you that there will be some staff changes from January 2013: Mrs Sarah Robson has been successful in being seconded to work for the Welsh Government as part of a network of experienced Senior Leaders to implement the new Masters in Education Programme for Newly Qualified Teachers. Her involvement in this will be of great benefit to our school and new teachers in South Wales. For the next two terms Mrs Robson's class will be taught by Miss Higgins who is currently undertaking Mrs Morgan's maternity in Year 1, so the first part of the spring term Mr Owen David will be teaching the Year 1 class. Mr David has taught here before and has come highly recommended from a local school.

I am sure you will share on our delight for Mrs Robson and continue to support Miss Higgins and welcome Mr David in January. Please find attached a timetable for the remainder of the term and may I take this opportunity to thank you once again and wish you all a very Happy and Healthy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

**Huw Jones**  
Headteacher