



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

Note from the Chair

The Education Briefing at the Civic Offices earlier this term was well-attended as usual and full of good meaty stuff, so that Governors in the Vale are well informed about the issues that directly affect them.

Proceedings were enlivened when, during Councillor Chris Elmore's address, a member of the audience revealed the shock resignation of the Minister for Education.

There is no doubt that Leighton Andrews has made his presence felt for good or ill, with his highlighting of the international PISA results and the introduction of Banding for secondary schools among other initiatives.

The new Minister, Huw Lewis has his work cut out in carrying on or modifying his legacy. Something which is likely to inform his thinking is the Robert Hill report on the Future Delivery of Education Services in Wales which has just been published and can be accessed on the Welsh Government website via the following link – <http://bit.ly/169eHkj>. The consultation ends on 13th September.

The media has made much of the suggestions about the roles of local government and the school improvement consortia in delivering education and its advocacy of more informal and formal collaborations between schools. School Federations may well be the way ahead.

What has not been mentioned are the very strong recommendations on strengthening school leadership. Those of you who have been recruiting a Headteacher will have discovered how few people are prepared to take on this demanding role. Outstanding schools need outstanding leaders, and Wales has too few of them.

May I wish you a restful summer holiday, reading Robert Hill's report on the beach, returning revived for the challenge of a new academic year in September.

Martin Price

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

Issue 29 Summer Term 2013

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

In association with the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Governor Support Unit

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3rd Millennium Learning Award – Ashgrove School judged as ‘world class’

Ashgrove School is the proud recipient of the prestigious 3rd Millennium Learning Award from Naace – promoting the role of technology in advancing education.

Ashgrove School is now one of only 80 schools in the UK and abroad to have received the Award. All of the schools receiving the Award have already proved to the world that they have a solid understanding of how to harness technology for learning - they all have the ICT Mark.

The new Award is, however, significantly different. There is a firm focus on learning; technology is there, but now it is assumed and ubiquitous; learning is now developing in new and exciting ways and the 3rd Millennium Learning Award aims to showcase them to the school community.

Ashgrove School has some interesting things going on when it comes to learning. For a start, it is taking a more independent stand, more focused on the needs of its community; their pupils are more self-directed, their learning more personalised. They have close relationships with their communities and their pupils are pushing the boundaries in the depth and scope of their learning.

Schools engaged in the Award are capturing and sharing their good practice through the creation of a short public video aimed at parents and the school community. The video is a core part of the Award and it is supported by additional commentary that explains to educators how and why they have developed their practice in the way they have. This Award is not the preserve of school managers or consultants but reaches deeply into a school, the teachers, the pupils, the parents - everyone with a stake in the vibrant learning community that is Ashgrove School.

Simon Wilson, ICT Coordinator commented: ‘The 3rd Millennium Learning Award has been a great experience for our school and demonstrates that how hard the school work to ensure that technology is used effectively to support learning for all of our pupils. This Award is an acknowledgement from Naace, a national and well respected organisation, that Ashgrove School provide an education that is fit for the 21st century. Not only do we demonstrate good practice across the school but we also lead the field in demonstrating how technology can support and accelerate learning.

Lucinda Searle, chair of the Naace Board of Management commented: ‘Naace applauds all those involved in the 3rd Millennium Learning Award, most notably Ashgrove School. We have some amazing professionals working in our schools who are passionate about embedding technology to enhance the learning that can take place for all children. These schools are world class. We look forward to sharing the success stories of these schools with the community. This is another example of how we hope to advance education through the appropriate use of technology.’

Full details can be found at <http://www.naace.co.uk/thirdmillenniumlearningaward>

Notes for Editors

- The Self-review Framework is an online tool launched in April 2006 to assist schools in identifying, improving and benchmarking the use of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) in learning, teaching and management of schools. Schools evaluate their progress against a four-level scale for aspects of development grouped under six major elements. Since its introduction, over 17400 schools have used it to review and plan their use of technology. www.naacesrf.com
- The ICT Mark is an integral part of the Self-review Framework. It is recognition of a school's achievements in reaching a standard of maturity in their use of technology. This optional accreditation is evidence that the school has undergone an extensive and thorough review of its use of technology. Award of the ICT Mark is made when the school has satisfied an assessor that their plans and provision have met or exceeded the national standard. Visits normally last half a day and may include review of curriculum plans, examination of systems and interviews with staff and pupils. In June 2013, over 2600 schools had been awarded the ICT Mark since the start of the scheme. www.naace.co.uk/ictmark
- Naace is the professional association for those concerned with advancing education through the appropriate use of technology. Naace administers the ICT Mark and provides help desk support for the Self-review Framework. It created the Naacemark for Schools scheme, which was a predecessor of the ICT Mark. www.naace.co.uk

Clodagh struck gold!

The sun is shining, so I know it seems like a bizarre time to be talking about Christmas. However, as I just couldn't coincide announcing the results of our Christmas card recycling competition with last edition of this newsletter, and as our schools have again done so well, I would like to share their successes with you.

A new shining star and fabulous familiar faces were the theme of the 2013 edition of the popular Vale recycling competition.

This year 30 Vale schools collected cards for recycling as part of The Vale of Glamorgan Council's scheme, choosing to simply take part or enter a competition to find the highest collecting pupil and school. The schools competition is based on pupil numbers as well as the number of cards collected, meaning that even our smallest schools had a chance to win.

Mike Farrell, Headteacher (at the time of the scheme, Mike has since retired) at Ysgol Erw'r Delyn in Penarth was delighted to hear of his school's success "We were thrilled to win the £100 first prize in the schools category for the second year. We're a small school of 50 pupils, yet thanks to fabulous community support our total of over 11,000 cards averages out at 225 cards per pupil."

St Illtyd Primary School in Llantwit Major scooped second place and £75, while Murch Junior School came in third with their total averaging out at just short of 100 cards collected by each pupil.

A Penarth pupil showed her recycling credentials this year to win gold. Clodagh McKechnie from Stanwell School collected 7,250 cards to win a £100 gift card, and dazzled as much with her smile at winning as with her impressive total.

Robbie Hawkins from St David's Church in Wales Primary School clinched the silver £75 prize with an awesome 6,030 cards, while Ceri Jauncey from St Illtyd Primary School secured third place.

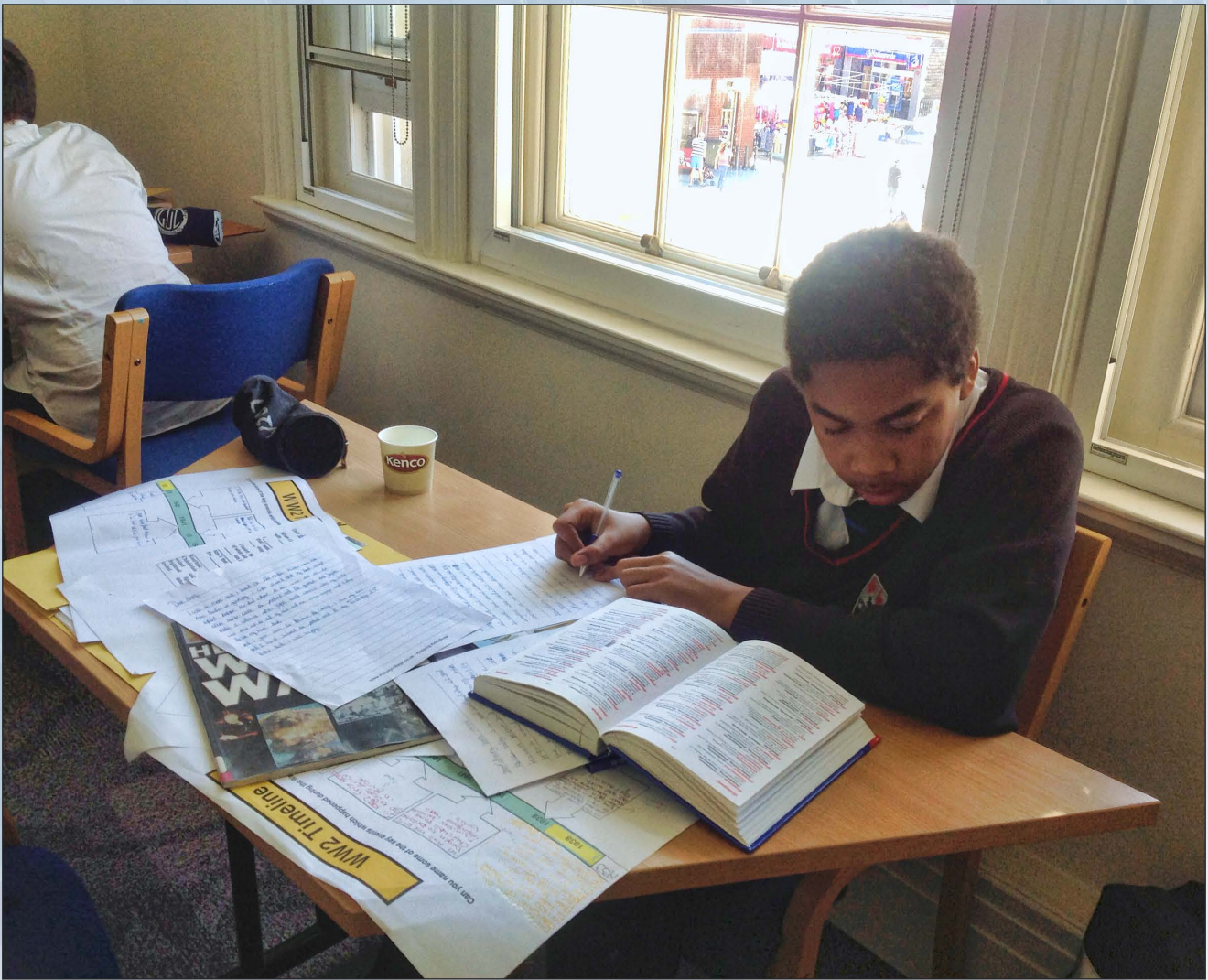
Councillor Rob Curtis, Cabinet Member for the Environment and Visible Services expressed his delight with the schools' support of the scheme when he said "For a variety of reasons, not least cost, I think we may well send less Christmas cards nowadays. However, we know that this scheme is popular amongst our schools who use it to raise awareness of recycling and work with their local communities."

Rob finished by saying "Thank you to our participating schools and their amazing support networks of parents, guardians, staff, governors, families and our keen Vale recycling residents, all of whom made this scheme such a success."

Sam Harrison, Waste Awareness Officer

For further information please either telephone: 01446 700111 or email: visible@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk





EMAS/TES Key Stage 3 PLC on World War II

Pupils from Barry Comprehensive School, Cowbridge Comprehensive School, Llantwit Major comprehensive School, St Cyres Comprehensive School and St Richard Gwyn R.C High School, have been working collaboratively on a World War II project. Pupils researched the impact of World War II in different parts of the world, from Poland to the Pacific.

The project provided Minority Ethnic, English as an Additional Language and Traveller pupils with targeted Literacy support, using a Professional Learning Community model. The overall purpose of the project has been to raise standards in writing in Key Stage 3.

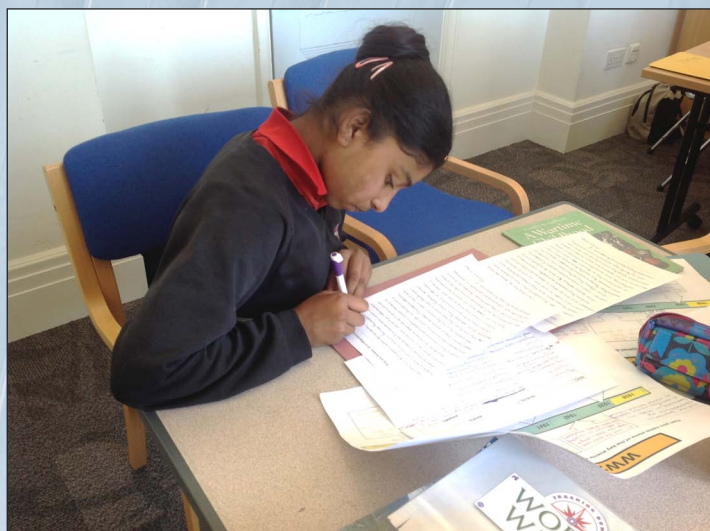
The project aims were to:

- develop a multi lingual resource to use across the LA
- improve levels of writing
- engage families
- extend collaborative working between schools
- engage disengaged pupils.

EMAS and the TES met with school staff to identify pupils at risk of underachievement. Data also used to inform the professional which pupils would be suitable. EMAS and the TES have monitored the attainment on a weekly basis to track progress and focus the nature of support available back in school.

The project has been running for six weeks and already clear lines of interest from the pupils have emerged on the topic of WWII from a global perspective, from Poland to the Pacific. 100% of pupils attending have improved levels of writing. Previous reluctant readers are seeking out and borrowing books.

The project has been really successful. Through the project a multi lingual history resource has been created in partnership with families. The pupils on the project have improved their writing by at least one NC writing level. 80% of the targeted families engaged with the process.



Home Language Qualifications Project May 2013

The project consisted of the organisation and invigilation of both GCSE and A' Level exams for EAL pupils in three comprehensive schools in the Vale of Glamorgan. In total there were 25 pupils sitting exams covering 13 different languages, provided by 5 different examination boards. The pupils ranged from year 9 to year 11.

The project involved liaising with schools to organise revision sessions for pupils sitting exams. EMAS supplied schools with exam specifications, for each exam, to hand out to students. The team provided translators for revisions sessions and liaised with examination officers to co-ordinate exams.

The project was a success because a total of 25 pupils took part. Good relationships with schools aided the process and ensured the pupils were well supported. This project allowed pupils to celebrate their own language and gain a qualification in it. This opportunity for the pupils raised awareness of diversity in the Secondary Schools. It was a positive experience for pupils in Year 9 because it allowed them to gain an insight into GCSE exams and opportunity to learn exam skills at an earlier stage than their non EAL peers.

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	Mrs	P	Hardy	All Saints C/W Primary
14	Mrs	S	Williams	All Saints C/W Primary
15	Mrs	K	Kemp	Llancarfan Primary
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

Action to Improve Attendance by the Education Welfare Service

Attendance is a very important issue in schools. Pupils who attend well achieve better results in Y11 than their classmates who regularly miss a few days each month.

Generally attendance is good in schools in the Vale. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) continues to work hard to support schools to improve. Attendance data has been analysed and used to identify schools where attendance and/or unauthorised absence is a concern.

Over the last few weeks, this analysis has been shared with primary head teachers. Discussions have covered issues particular to each school but have also highlighted the use of the Good Practice Guide. This has been developed by the EWS and outlines strategies and working practices used by schools in the Vale that have impacted positively on attendance. Head teachers have been reminded of the Attendance Matters booklet that highlights to parents the importance of a child's attendance.

Actions that schools are taking include:

- Updating recording systems
- Ensuring that staff are appropriately trained in attendance issues, including recording
- Increasing information to teaching staff to raise awareness of the issue within the school
- More regular monitoring by school staff
- Considering attendance with the governing body
- Emphasising the importance of attendance on the school website and at parents' evenings
- Increasing communication with parents of pupils with poor attendance
- Setting a school target for pupils' attendance
- Rewarding pupils who attend well
- Changing assembly time

If, despite all the school's efforts, a pupil's attendance falls below 80% over a period of time, a referral to the EWS for more intensive support should be made.

Monitoring phone calls and follow up visits will be made over the next few weeks and months to see how schools are progressing. It has been very pleasing working with head teachers who are keen to continue to make improvements for the pupils in their schools.

Appetite for Life Strategy

The Welsh Government's Appetite for Life (A4L) Strategy will become legislative from September 2013 for Primary and Secondary Schools in Wales. It is with great satisfaction that I am able to report all Primary and 6 Secondary Schools managed by Vale Catering Services are compliant to the food and nutritional standards. This has resulted in a tremendous amount of work carried out by the nutrition team within the Council's catering service.

All Primary Schools now have their A4L file which includes all nutritional information for existing and the current menu on offer. This file will become a key document for Estyn Inspectors if this is the course of action to be taken from September for all future School Inspections. Please ask your Headteacher to review your copy. Authorised copies for the 6 compliant Secondary Schools will be available from September 2013.

As stated in Version 6 of the A4L Strategy, implementation is not solely the responsibility of catering staff, but that of Head Teachers and Governors who are accountable in ensuring that A4L is put into operation as part of the Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009. There are guidelines relating to the A4L Strategy produced by the Welsh Government for governors. This document can also be downloaded from www.wales.gov.uk/appetiteforlife

