



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

Note from the Chair

So, finally, we are getting back to some sort of normality as Foundation Phase children return to school and a draft plan is announced about when other children can return to school. It makes me really annoyed to hear stories in the media about schools re-opening. They never closed!

Apart from the not insignificant number of key worker children who have been attending the Hubs, teachers have been working their socks off to provide high quality blended learning – live lessons, recorded lessons, on-line provision on Google Classroom, and live check-in sessions. Schools have been very much open during each of the Covid-19 Lockdowns.

One of the many challenges facing secondary schools is the thorny subject of assessment and fair ways of awarding qualifications. This year everything will be based on the evidence of ongoing work that learners have been doing at home and at school over this academic year. The focus will be on what teachers can demonstrate is a fair appraisal of work in their subject. This seems the most equitable way of valuing the work our learners have put in over their time in education and provides a firm basis for their future in further education and the job market. It will be overseen by Qualifications Wales and a wide range of stakeholders across Wales.

The job of Qualifications Wales is to make sure that qualifications in Wales are the best they can be for all learners, and that there is public confidence in qualifications and the Welsh qualification system. As the independent regulator, their role is also to consider the qualifications that will be needed in the future, particularly on how the Welsh Government's new curriculum for Wales will be assessed from 2027.

A new curriculum will need new forms of assessment. Is one three-hour exam at the end of a two-year course still the best way to do this? What are the lessons learned from the Covid-enforced teacher assessments in 2020 and 2021? Qualifications Wales will be consulting widely on the best way forward. The first consultation exercise, Qualified for the Future, which looks at the future of GCSEs in Wales closes on 9th April. Future consultations will look at how these qualifications are designed and assessed. Please read the documents and make your views known.

Thank you for all your good work in keeping our schools safe and effective places of learning and well-being in these challenging times.

Dr Martin Price

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

Issue 48 Spring Term 2021

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

It's VSGA@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

alternatively you can contact VSGA by post at:

**VSGA Governor Support Unit
Learning & Development Dept.
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Civic Offices, Holton Road,
Barry CF63 4RU**

Secondary Education 2021 (Year 7) and Primary Education 2021 (Primary) Process Review

The Admissions Team's efforts in not only contacting parents to submit an application, but also advising on the application process in relation to the use of multiple preferences and the catchment area school being selected as a preference, resulted in 99.4% of parents of children attending Year 6 at a Vale of Glamorgan Primary school submitting an application on time for their child to attend Secondary Education in 2021. We are hopeful this will continue to improve the rate of successful applicants receiving an offer of a school place for their child/children during the 1st round of allocations which will be confirmed on the offer date – 1st March 2021. This was similar for the reception admission process where again parents were repeatedly contacted to ensure they made an application for their child to attend reception class in September 2021. This resulted in 99.8% of parents submitting an application on time and who will receive an offer of a school place on the offer date of the 16 April 2021. The above steps taken by the admissions team will ensure that the vast majority of parents will receive an offer of a school place for their child/children on the national offer dates mentioned above.

The council's admissions online application process now seems well embedded with 92% of parents applying for a Year 7 September 2021 place online during the 2020/21 academic year which is in line with the previous 3 years of between 90-95%.

Update on Co-ordinated School Admission Arrangements 2020-21

Following a consultation to continue a pilot scheme for co-ordinated admission arrangements for the Reception age group for 2021-22, the governing bodies of Llansannor C.W Primary, St Andrew's Major C.W Primary, St Bride's Major C.W Primary, St David's C.W Primary and Wick & Marcross C.W Primary have agreed to continue their participation in the scheme. In addition to Vale of Glamorgan community Schools you can now also apply for places in these schools by using the online application service.

The pilot scheme has proved to be successful and has allowed parents additional preferences whilst also resolving the issue of parents being allocated multiple places via different admissions authorities. This therefore creates a more transparent process for parents, schools and the local authority. Feedback is continually received from both participating schools and parents as to how the process can be improved and we are keen to enhance the support available to all parties wherever possible.

The 2020-21 academic year has also seen St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School participate in a pilot scheme for the Transfer to Secondary Education 2021-22. The pilot scheme is designed with the same principles as the primary admissions pilot scheme; In addition to Vale of Glamorgan community Schools you can now also apply for places in these schools by using the online application service. This will provide an improved service for parents and greater clarity and opportunities for future collective working for the school and the local authority whilst ensuring that pupils are not holding more than one offer of a place at a secondary school on the national offer date.

Sam Mawhinney

**Logistics & Access Officer / Swyddog Derbyniadau Cynorthwyol
School Improvement & Inclusion / Strategaeth, Dysgu yn y Gymuned ac Adnoddau**

Operational guidance for schools and settings to support limited attendance

Please click on the link below:

<https://gov.wales/operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-support-limited-attendance>

INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES: CORONAVIRUS

Please note the attached advice has been updated:

<https://gov.wales/information-school-governing-bodies-coronavirus>

CHILDRENS AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIBRARY

My name is Ben James and this month marks a year since I was appointed as Children and Young People's Librarian for the Vale. It has been nothing if not a learning curve. New challenges, which we could not have foreseen, have meant that libraries have had to be especially imaginative, finding creative solutions as the Covid situation unfolded. Despite these difficulties, we were still able to offer plenty of children's activities through the year, including the ever-popular Summer Reading Challenge, albeit in a new online format. Alongside this, we ran activities and events every day of the summer holidays through our social media, with a daily reading by Children's Laureate, Cressida Cowell, of her wildly popular How To Train Your Dragon series. Though not able to enter libraries for most of the year, children and their parents may collect books from the library by using our Click and Collect service. Books can be reserved on the library catalogue in advance or parents may phone the library to prepare a lucky bag of books for loan. With a little notice, we can also prepare collections of books for school classes, if needed.

Though we've been unable to hold any physical events in our branches, we quickly embraced the possibilities of Zoom to bring learning and fun directly into children's homes. We played host to several virtual ZooLab workshops, with our young audiences able to interact with the presenters and their Halloween- and Christmas-themed stories. In October, we celebrated National Poetry Day with a specially prepared performance by former National Poet of Wales, Gillian Clarke, and for Libraries Week we held a reading and drawing workshop with local author, Megan Mattravers. Finally, December saw further creativity with Christmas activities and an "advent calendar" of daily story times, songs, crafts (and even bagpipes) from Barry Library.

This has been an incredibly difficult time for us all, with children being hit hard by lack of school attendance and isolation from their friends during lockdowns. My colleagues and I in the Vale libraries were delighted to see the launch of schemes by both The Reading Agency and the Books Council of Wales to support children in times of stress with the introduction of a new bibliotherapy book collection. The Reading Well/Iechyd Da collection is there to support children to understand and manage feelings and emotions, and deal with issues such as anxiety, grief and loss.

As we look ahead to 2021, with the vaccination programme well underway across the country, we can begin to feel more optimistic and look forward (tentatively) to a return to some kind of normality in the not-too-distant future. Until then, we will continue to provide the same excellent service to our users by whatever means we can. A number of local schools are currently preparing their entries for the Book Slam competition, which will be judged in May and which is happening virtually for the first time. Preparations are also already underway for this year's Summer Reading Challenge, which we hope to make bigger and better than the last.

Ben James

Children and Young People's Librarian for the Vale

INTRODUCING THE HEALTH SAFETY AND WELL-BEING TEAM AT THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN

Just to introduce myself my name is Sue Williams and I commenced employment with the Vale on 1st September 2020 as the Health, Safety and Well-being Manager. I started my career in Local Government in Bridgend when I left University but then moved into Social Housing when Bridgend became the first housing stock transfer in Wales. After spending 17 years in Housing it was time for a new challenge and I have returned to Local Government during the pandemic.

As a health, safety, and well-being team we are currently carrying out a mapping exercise to re-evaluate the service that we provide to schools, at the time of writing we have only scratched the surface with this. We are currently working really hard to support schools during the pandemic navigating the numerous changes to government guidelines so that schools can implement these practically. In addition to this we are updating the school's health & safety staffnet page and collaboratively working with Organisation Development and Learning to implement and update health & safety training on the iDev system.

I have just completed a presentation to head teachers that focused on the health & safety management system in schools, their roles and responsibilities as well as some topical high risk areas including asbestos and fire safety. I am now working on a similar session for governors and look forward to meeting some of you at the training session on 21st June.

Sue Williams

Safety and Well-Being Manager

Make Your Mark 2020 - Vale of Glamorgan Results

My name is Ashleigh Watkins and I am the Member of UK Youth Parliament for the Vale of Glamorgan. The UK Youth Parliament provides opportunities for 11-18 year olds to use their elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning. It is my role to represent young people in the Vale of Glamorgan and raise awareness of issues important to them. Please find attached a summary document presenting the results of the recent Make Your Mark 2020 campaign that I helped roll out locally whilst being supported by the Vale Youth Service and the Vale Youth Cabinet.

The campaign took place during November last year with promotion across social media, schools, post 16 training providers and both digital and pop up youth clubs supporting young people to engage in democracy. Given the challenging conditions of the Coronavirus pandemic, 763 young people in the Vale of Glamorgan placed their votes resulting in the area having the third highest turnout in Wales.

Young people had the opportunity to vote on both devolved and UK issues. In the Vale, the most voted for UK issue was 'Support our mental health' and the top devolved issue was 'Homelessness'. We will be launching a new campaign in 2021 that will focus on one of these issues. Collaboration has already started with the Vale Youth Cabinet and opportunities will be provided to youth groups to find out what these issues mean for young people.

If you would like to find out more about the 2020 Make Your Mark ballot please visit our VOG Blog post here: <https://vogblog.wales/make-your-mark-2020-results/>

Alternatively, if you have any other questions please let us know.

We look forward to working in partnership in addressing the issues important to young people in the Vale.

Ashley Watkins
Member of UK Youth Parliament for the Vale of Glamorgan

This message has been sent on behalf of Professor Charlotte Williams OBE and the members of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group.

Dear Stakeholders,

Today, we are pleased to announce that our final report has been published: <https://gov.wales/final-report-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-communities-contributions-and-cynefin-new-curriculum>

This work is unprecedented and much needed and the review represents a ground-breaking trajectory in curriculum reform in Wales.

We would like to thank you for your valued involvement and would ask that you share this report link as widely as possible with your networks and on your social media channels.

Education alone cannot address the social, cultural and structural factors that sustain racial inequality. However, education can take us a long way forward in producing the ethical and informed citizens of the future.

With thanks,

**Professor Charlotte Williams OBE and the members of the
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities,
Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group**

Update on the Additional Learning Needs system

The Minister for Education has today announced that the Additional Learning Needs Code and associated regulations have been laid before Senedd Cymru.

You can view the Code, Explanatory Memorandum and Integrated Impact Assessment **here** and the associated regulations **here**:

- The Additional Learning Needs (Wales) Regulations 2021
- The Education Tribunal for Wales Regulations 2021
- The Equality Act 2010 (Capacity of parents and persons over compulsory school age) (Wales) Regulations 2021
- The Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Management Committees etc.) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2021
- The Independent Schools (Provision of Information) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2021

Further information about the ALN transformation programme and guidance on the current SEN system is available here including our frequently asked questions and ALN transformation programme guide.

Please send any queries to **SENReforms@gov.wales**

Embedding a whole-school approach to mental health and well-being

Now more than ever, the emotional and mental well-being of our children and young people and workforce has to be our number one priority.

The new Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being is intended to support schools, including pupil referral units (PRUs) and education settings in reviewing their own well-being landscape and in developing plans to address their weaknesses and build on their strengths.

Here's a letter that has been issued to Directors of Education.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US!

You can support the campaign by:

- sharing and re-tweeting messages from our social media channels: Twitter; Education Wales Facebook and Education begins at home Facebook
- Whole-school approach - YouTube Playlist - Share our animation with learners and case studies with the workforce
- including information on your website, in newsletters, emails
- sharing with your networks / young people / stakeholders / parents/carers

TEXT FOR NEWSLETTERS

Embedding a whole-school approach to mental health and well-being

The whole-school approach is about supporting good emotional and mental well-being by making relationships stronger:

- between you and your teachers;
- and between parents, families, carers, and any professionals working with the school

Our new statutory framework supports everyone to ensure positive mental health and emotional well-being of all learners and staff is at the heart of every school

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

For stakeholders

Building stronger relationships and supporting each other is at the very heart of the new #WholeSchoolApproach to mental health and emotional well-being framework <https://bit.ly/2PTNPs7>

For learners

New animation explains how stronger relationships with your friends and teachers can help and support you <https://bit.ly/3eDXfCs> #WholeSchoolApproach

Remember to tag us in @WG_Education

And use the hashtag #WholeSchoolApproach

FURTHER HELP AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

You can signpost young people to our **Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit** should they need support now and in the future.

Many thanks



VALE RIGHTS AMBASSADORS PROJECT – Delivering Teacher Support for Super Ambassador Scheme.

The Vale Rights Ambassadors project which is managed by the Vale Youth Service has continued to support Super Ambassador schools to raise awareness of Children's Rights this term.

This term the Vale Rights Ambassadors project has delivered digital teacher training for primary schools to promote the Children's Commissioner for Wales' Super Ambassador Scheme. A free scheme that we encourage all Vale of Glamorgan primary schools to sign up to that enables pupils to learn about the UNCRC and Children's Rights.

In lieu of our annual events where we bring pupils from different primary schools together to teach them about rights, the Vale Rights Ambassadors project have instead created a wealth of resources. These include a teaching presentation, activity cards and video explanations to enable pupils to still learn about their rights. A total of 18 primary school teachers joined us over a series of 3 different dates this spring term.

For more information on the free Ambassadors schemes from the Children's Commissioner please follow this link: <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/our-schemes/> We would like to encourage governors to promote them and support their schools to sign up.



Super Ambassador Teacher Training held on the 19th January 2021

VALE YOUTH SERVICE



JOIN A YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROJECT TODAY

- ARE YOU AGED 11-25?
- INTERESTED IN CHILDREN'S RIGHTS?
- CARE ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY?
- WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
- VISIT VOGBLOG.WALES FOR MORE INFO

MAKE NEW FRIENDS
LEARN NEW SKILLS
GAIN NEW EXPERIENCES
VOLUNTEER



LLANTWIT YOUTH COUNCIL

A group of young people aged 11-18 who live, work or go to school in Llantwit Major who influence what happens in the town by discussing important issues with decision-makers. Llantwit Youth Council members represent their peers, local schools, youth organisations and clubs.

Email: VALEYOUTHACTION@GMAIL.COM



PENARTH YOUTH ACTION

A group of young people aged 11-18 who live, work or go to school in Penarth who take action to improve their town and ensure the views of young people are heard by local decision-makers. Penarth Youth Action members represent local schools, youth organisations, youth clubs and their peers.

Email: VALEYOUTHACTION@GMAIL.COM



RIGHTS AMBASSADORS

The Rights Ambassadors project raises awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Children & Young People's National Participation Standards. The project gives young people across the Vale of Glamorgan the opportunity to make a positive contribution to their local community.

Email: ALEXTHOMAS@VALEOFGLAMORGAN.GOV.UK



YOUTH CABINET

The Youth Cabinet is the elected voice of young people living in the Vale of Glamorgan and represents their views and opinions to decision makers within the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Email: VALEYOUTHCABINET@GMAIL.COM

@vysvale



**"YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY WHAT YOU
THINK IN ALL MATTERS AFFECTING YOU AND
FOR YOUR VIEWS TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY"
(ARTICLE 12 OF THE UNCRC)**

VSGA Management Committee 2020-22

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

No.	Title	Initial	Surname	School
1	Mr	R	Bailey	Peterston-Super-Ely C/W Primary
2	Dr	C	Brown	Llantwit Major Comp
3	Mr	N	Craggs	Gwenfo C/W Primary
4	Mrs	M	Gibbs	Romilly Primary
5	Mr	A	Hennessey	Oak Field Primary & Ysgol Sant Baruc
6	Mrs	S	Hodges	Ysgol Sant Baruc
7	Mrs	S	Jenkins-Welch	St Andrews C/W Primary & St Cyres Comprehensive
8	Mrs	J	Lynch-Wilson	St Athan Primary
9	Mrs	A	Males	St Cyres Comp
10	Mrs	A	Malkin	Gladstone Primary
11	Dr	M	Price	St Richard Gwyn R/C High
12	Mr	D	Treharne	Llansannor C/W Prim
13	Mrs	T	Vaughan-Taylor	Cowbridge Comp
14	Mrs	S	Williams	All Saints C/W Primary
15	Cllr Mr	M	Wilson	Fairfield Primary & Victoria Primary

Parent Governor Representatives' (PGRs) terms of office

PGR - Prim Vacant

PGR - Sec Vacant

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Please could you make a note in your diary for the next Education Update & Briefing Session will be

Wednesday 30 June 2021 at 5.30pm