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Note from the Chair

I am hopeful that Spring is finally on the way. We have had some lovely sunny days, and the days are visibly getting longer. It is brighter in the morning and sunsets are moving to after 6.00pm at long last. Perhaps this will lift spirits after what I feel has been a very gloomy winter.

My wellbeing and state of mind is affected by the weather, but also a myriad other things – my work, my relationships, my scope for leisure time and so on. And what applies to me also applies in the schools we have charge over. How much do you consider the wellbeing of your Headteacher?

It is a lonely job being a Headteacher. The buck really does stop with you. In a school crisis all eyes turn to you for guidance on what to do next. You are the leader who gets everybody working in the same direction, who praises and chivvies people on – the figurehead, the public face of the school to the pupils, and also to the community.

But you are also the manager of a very complex structure. There are a lot of moving parts in a school, apart from the pupils, staff and Governors to keep safe and engaged, there are mundane day to day issues like ensuring the roof is watertight, that the bills are being paid on time, that everybody has enough teaching materials, that there are no rats in the kitchen, whether the tree in the playground is undermining the school hall.

Governors need to take care of their Headteachers. Are you helping reduce their stress-levels or adding to them? One simple point – when did you last review the timing of Governing Body meetings? Seven in the evening may be perfect for the Chair but is less good for staff who have been in school since eight in the morning. Thirteen-hour days are good for no-one.

Is your Headteacher getting proper support? Do they have other Heads they can turn to for advice? Is the school Improvement Partner supportive? Is there a training course that could help them in a particular aspect of the job? Are Governing Body meetings helpful and constructive?

Let's hope for a warm sunny Spring to put everyone in a good mood for the next challenge we face.

May I wish you a Happy Easter

Dr Martin Price: Chair VSGA and Vice Chair of Governors, St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School, Barry

Transformation Update – Presentation Slides

This Transformation Update was recently presented to Primary Head teachers, the budget forum and the Senior Leadership Team. This provides an overview of Learning & Skills' approach to this programme that consists of 4 work streams,

The update contains a summary analysis of the school contract data with key headlines on spends across schools, primaries, secondaries and clusters as well as a spotlight on waste contracting.

The slides also provide an update on progress made in relation to contracting workstream and the agency costs along with some outlined next steps.

Transformation Projects Workflow



Contracting

Focus on understanding schools contractual arrangements and requirements. Working with schools to identify sustainable and cost effective contracting models/arrangements. E.g. Quick win waste contracting.



Workforce (Agency)

Develop an understanding of workforce pressures and defining operating models that build resilience and capacity. Modelling new approaches to addressing supply issues in a cost effective and sustainable way.



Teaching & Learning & measuring impact

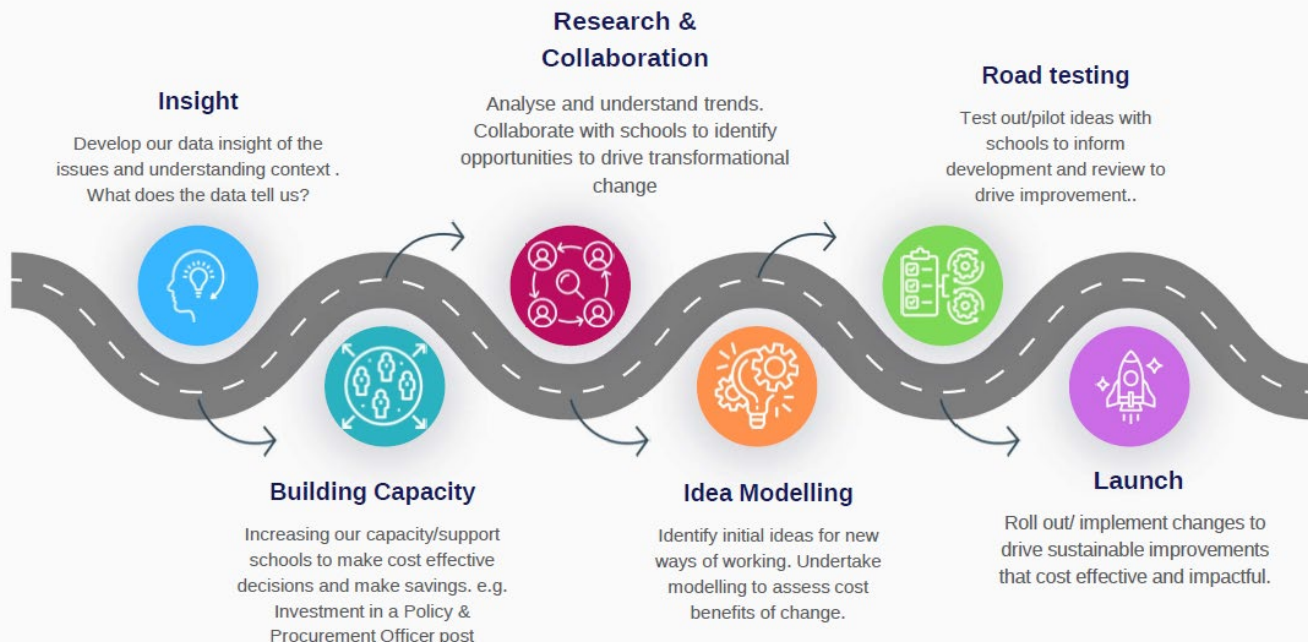
Developing practice to strengthen Teaching and Learning across all schools. To enhance school to school learning, to drive improvement and enhance the outcomes of all learners.



Digital

Maximising opportunities that digital technology can offer. Using our digital assets more resourcefully and innovatively. E.g. Hwb, new email addresses, new MIS,

Transformation Roadmap



Contracting- Analysis

£2.419M

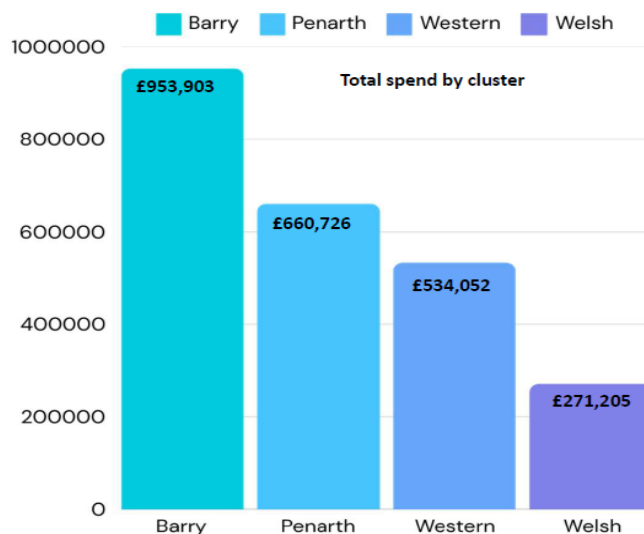
spent on contracts across all schools



Highest single contract spend

£87,366 on cleaning

Lowest spend £20 on confidential waste disposal

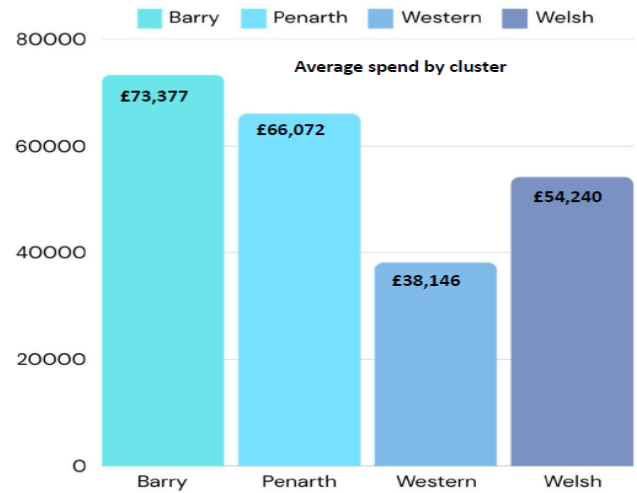




Contracting- Analysis

Average spend
£59,021
 across primaries

Most costly
 contracts- Cleaning
£990,722
 spent on cleaning
 contracts across
 primaries.



Highest Spends

School	Cluster	Total spend	Highest contract spend
School 1	Barry	£135,324.74	£19,266
School 2	Barry	£130,576.01	£87,366
School 3	Barry	£124,177.13	£39,380
School 4	Penarth	£100,861.00	£36,204
School 5	Barry	£96,656.66	£22,187
School 6	Penarth	£96,089.20	£34,754
School 7	Barry	£91,706.23	£53,299
School 8	Penarth	£87,857.88	£39,102
School 9	Western	£80,273.42	£40,407
School 10	Barry	£77,172.23	£58,544.

Contracting comparison

Comparators	School A	School B
NOR	232	233
eFSM	45	38
Budget position	£410K deficit	£71K surplus
Total Contract spend	£135,324.74	£58,846.80
Average contract cost	£1,691	£2,101
Highest Value Contract	£19,266.21	£31,380.00

Contracting

Big ticket items

- Cleaning
- Waste
- Photocopiers/Printers
- Grounds maintenance

Opportunities-

- Cluster based contracting arrangements
- Bringing services in house where there is capacity and it's cost effective.
- Developing our procurement models and support for schools to achieve best value.

£203,261 Spotlight on waste

spent on waste collection across primary schools in 2023/24

Year to date 2024/25 Figures

£148,950 spent on waste collection

£9,399

Highest waste collection spend in 2023/24

£4,619

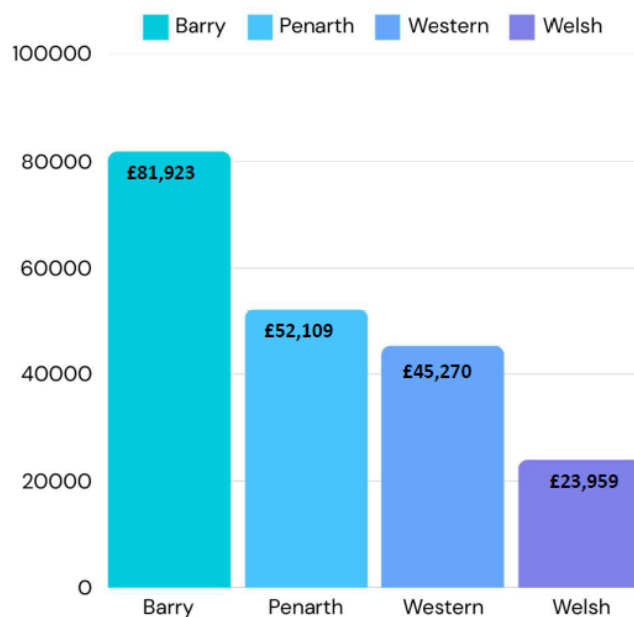
Average spend for primaries in 2023/24

£8,765

Highest waste collection spend in Year to date 2024/25

£3,385

Year to date average spend for primaries in 2024/25



Waste headlines

Observations-

- Significant variance in contract costs.
- Types and length of contracts even vary with the same supplier.
- Variance between contract value versus what is spent/invoiced.
- Add on costs for additional lifts/missed collections etc. Early exit penalties and lengthy notice periods.
- Highest cost supplier is Biffa and Veolia.

Next steps-

- In discussion with waste services to customise quotes for schools.
- Focus on those schools whose contracts are end in the next few months.
- Looking to use VoG waste quotes as a comparator to your existing contracts and/or any other quotes you seek.

Workforce (Agency)

£7.5M

spent on agency
2023/24

£6.2M

spent on agency to
date 2024/25 as at
Month 10.

Agency work stream update

- Series of meetings with a small cross section of schools each with different demographics and patterns of agency spend.
- Purpose of the meetings was to build a stronger knowledge base of staff operating models, understanding agency requirements, and identifying what staffing challenges exist across our schools.
- Intention to build a clearer picture across our schools of the current ways of working and explore what opportunities there are to support schools in reducing cost pressures on their budgets.

Workforce (Agency)

Agency key observations

- Schools visited are using agency staffing for a variety of reasons in a variety of ways.
- Common themes- Importance of continuity. Where possible schools try use cover from their existing pool of staff before opting to use agency, but this is not always possible due to capacity. Schools are using agency in different ways, some as short-term response (reaction on day) and others are using instead of employing on contract. Variable feedback on the use of the LTS scheme.
- Challenges- Finding the right agency staff. Spikes in agency usage across Nov, Dec and Feb and then May/June (secondaries only exam periods). Costs of agency staffing high. Reliance on agency has potential to impact on quality of teaching and learning in the classroom if there is frequent turnover of supply staff.

Workforce (Agency)

Opportunities

- Short term- Explore potential opportunities for building in capacity across schools for cover supervision. Whether this is on a school or cluster basis.
- Short term- Explore option of using a preferred agency supply on a cluster to cluster basis to leverage agency fee negotiation.
- Long term- Explore options for developing our own agency model as a trading arm arrangement similar to Big Fresh.

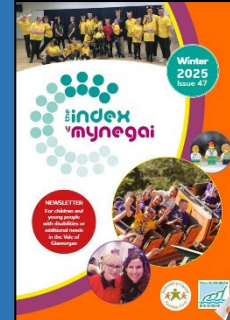
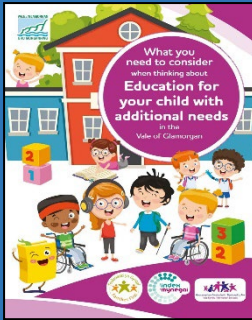
Workforce (Agency)

Next Steps

- Need to strengthen our understanding of staffing structures. Schools to submit their staffing structures (that include any semi-permanent use of agency).
- Undertake some data modelling work using case study schools to work out the cost benefits of adding additional capacity versus alternative options.

As a governor – How can I support positive active conversations around procurement and contracts as part of a GB meeting

- How are we procuring contracts? Are we spending too much?
- Are there any contracts that could be reviewed and money saved? (eg: waste, cleaning)
- What is my school actively doing to ensure they are getting the best value for money from their contractors?



The Index, funded by Families First, is the Vale of Glamorgan's voluntary register of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs. The register provides a clearer picture of need across the Vale of Glamorgan. Parent carers or professionals can [sign up to the Index online](#). Those signed up are sent weekly Ebulletins and twice-yearly newsletters with information on inclusive activities, financial help, family support, education, transition and much more.

New Education Booklet

The Index has recently published a brand-new education booklet. It explores alternative learning options, highlights available support and offers tips and guidance such as suggested questions to ask staff when visiting schools. The booklet has been developed in collaboration with local partners aimed to equip parent carers on navigating the Education System and making informed decisions.

What you need to consider when thinking about education options for your child with additional needs

47th Issue of The Index Newsletter

The Index has recently published their Winter Edition of The Index Newsletter. It covers the recent work that The Index has been involved with, local and national activities, family support, useful contacts for key services and transition information. The newsletter is sent out digitally and in print across the Vale of Glamorgan including Vale schools, health visitors, hospitals, libraries and more.

Winter Index Newsletter - Issue 47

What families are saying about The Index,

“Thank you so much for all of this information. I have had so much advice from you and will look through all of the links and see which would work for X and our family. I will await X's phone call tomorrow it sounds brilliant. Thank you again for your support”.

“I love the Index!! the newsletters and the ebulletins are quite informative”

Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE): What school governors need to know

A new resource for school governors is now available on Hwb, and can be found within the existing suite of professional learning resources for RVE. provided by

Link to the professional learning resources : [Repository - Hwb](#)

Direct link to the Governor's play list: [View - Hwb](#)



Additionally, the Vale of Glamorgan Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics/Religious Education (SACRE/SAC) provides support to schools, governors and the local authority. Further information can be viewed on their website [Standing Advisory Council for Religion, Values and Ethics / Religious Education](#)

SACRE has many functions, however key ways that they can support schools and governing bodies include

- Advising about RVE within the curriculum for Wales
- Advising the LA about religious education and collective worship
- Support complaints procedures, where cases are referred to it should they concern religious education or collective worship

Training will be available in the Summer Term

Governor's annual reports

Updated guidance for school governing bodies on what information should be included in their governors' annual reports was published on the 31st January 2025. The full guidance can be viewed on the WG website

[Governors' annual reports \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

Governing bodies are encouraged to publish their reports during the Autumn Term. They must provide all parents and carers, with children registered at the school a copy of the annual report. Many schools publish the report on their website

The annual report **must** include specific information including

- Details of meetings with parents and carers over the past year
- Governors' details
- Performance and target information
- A financial statement
- Actions taken by the governing body or school during the year
- Organisation, plans and policies
- Healthy eating and drinking
- Curriculum, organisation of education and teaching methods
- Welsh Language
- Provision of school toilet facilities

In addition, governors may wish to include the following information:

- An introduction from the Chair
- Information about learner attendance and targets
- News, events and celebrations
- Governor Training
- A glossary or abbreviations or acronyms



Pupils Discipline and Exclusion The Equality Act and Discrimination



The Welsh Government guidance [Exclusion from schools and pupil referral units](#) was updated back in April 2024. The update was to bring the guidance in line with amendments to regulations, as well as being updated to fall into line with the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021. In addition there is now a more focused guidance around Equality and protected characteristics to assist schools in understanding and complying with their duties until the 2010 Act, specifically in relation to exclusions. There is a clear requirement that schools should operate in line with the principle of equality and non-discrimination as set out in article 2 of the UNCRC.

Schools are not prohibited from excluding learners with a protected characteristic, but it does prohibit schools from excluding learners because of their protected characteristic or discriminating unlawfully during the exclusions process. This applies to all exclusions, permanent or fixed-term.

It is also unlawful to exclude a learner with a protective characteristic for behaviour that a learner without a protective characteristic would not be excluded for. Schools are required to make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners both to the exclusions process and to their disciplinary sanctions.

If a pupil does not have an Individual Development Plan (IDP), or Additional Learning Needs (ALN) they may still have a protected characteristic. **No diagnosis or medical paperwork is necessarily required**, the test is; **Does the child or young person have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities?**

However, even more importantly, it is vital to remember that protected characteristics are not just related to disability. They also include gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The governing body of a school is required to have a general duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the 2010 Act and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not.

Meetings of the Discipline Committee

Exclusions of 5 days or fewer in one term

- If the parent, carer or learner wishes to request a meeting to discuss the exclusion, the Chair may convene a meeting. The committee can consider the parent/carer representations, but can't direct reinstatement. There is no time limit in which this meeting should be held, but the Chair should respond promptly to any request. **It is highly important, that any concerns about an exclusion (even short, fixed term exclusions of 1 or 2 days) are considered by the Pupil Discipline Committee and should NOT be investigated as a complaint.**

Exclusions of more than 5 days but no more than 15 days in a term.

- The committee **MUST** convene a meeting between the sixth and fiftieth school day to consider the exclusion, if the parent/carer and/or learner wishes to make representations to the committee. The outcome can either be that the Discipline Committee uphold the decision to exclude or if not, they may direct reinstatement. If the exclusion has already taken place, they can place a copy of their findings on the learner's school record. If a parent, carer or learner is unhappy with the decision, there is no right to an independent appeal following any decision by the governors. They can however, use the school complaints process if they feel that the Pupil Discipline committee has not responded to their concerns or discharged their responsibilities correctly
- Should a parent or learner consider that the exclusion is because of a disability their child or they have, then they are entitled to make a claim of disability discrimination to the Education Tribunal for Wales (ETW).

Permanent exclusions or one or more fixed term exclusions totalling more than 15 school days in a term,

- The committee must convene a meeting between the sixth and fifteenth school day to consider the exclusion. This meeting should either uphold the exclusion or overturn it and direct reinstatement. Where reinstatement is not possible because the exclusion has expired and the learner has returned to school, a copy of the committee's findings can be placed on the learner's school record. Should the Discipline Committee uphold the exclusion, there is a right to appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Exclusions and Pupil Disciplinary Committee Training will be available to all governors, Primary and Secondary in the Summer Term

News in brief

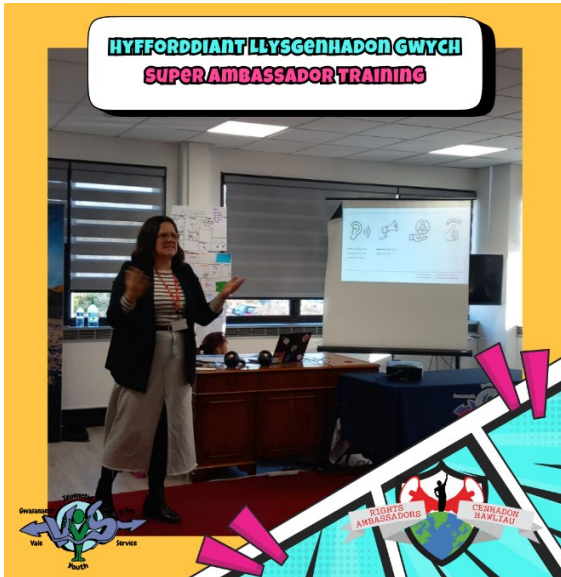
Vale Rights Ambassadors Super Ambassador Training Event 2024/25



Young people involved in the Vale Rights Ambassadors project planned this year's Super Ambassador event. This year, we welcomed, twenty-one primary schools bringing a total of forty-two pupils from across the county for a day of collaborative learning.

The event was opened by Councillor Rhiannon Birch, Cabinet Member for Education, Arts, and the Welsh Language. Councillor Birch took the time to outline the importance of the UNCRC and congratulated the children on their work within their schools.

In addition, participants received a personalised video direct from the Children's Commissioner of Wales, Rocio Cifuentes, encouraging them to keep up their hard work, stating the positive impact the Ambassador Scheme has on her work and outlining her current monthly matter scheme.



The event took place at the Civic Offices in Barry and was conducted in both Welsh and English. The Welsh portion of the event was facilitated by members of the Rights Ambassadors, whose first language is Welsh, along with a youth worker from URDD.

The Rights Ambassadors kicked started the event with a range of rights focused activities. Participants created their dream school looking at where they can access or implement Children and Young Peoples rights in school. The Rights Ambassadors supported the pupils to create a Super Ambassador superhero, encouraging them to think about what qualities you may need to be a successful Super Ambassador in school.

We had the privilege of welcoming the Children's Commissioner office, to deliver a workshop to raise awareness of the Children's Commissioner of Wales and her important role. Participants had the opportunity to complete a Chatter Box activity to assist their understanding.

The event also allowed participants to take part in a workshop delivered by Make it Soph, building and creating their own Rights Robot Mascots out of junk modelling. This interactive addition was well received by all the pupils.



The Super Ambassador Event 2025 brought together a number of services, organisations, key decision makers, as well as children and young people in the ultimate sense of collaborative learning. Not only did this give the opportunity to learn about children and young people's rights together but to highlight the necessity of coming together to raise awareness of the importance of embedding children rights in all we do.



News in Brief

New Multiply App

Learning for parents, guardians and school staff with Multiply C&V App

The Multiply C&V app, developed by Cardiff and Vale councils, is a free learning resource designed to support both parents and school staff to enhance their skills. With seven pathways covering supporting your child, essential skills, digital literacy, and teaching, the app provides a flexible and engaging way to build confidence and develop key skills.

Funded by the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, Multiply helps adults improve numeracy, support children's learning, and open doors to new job opportunities. Schools and governors can share this resource to empower families and strengthen learning at home and in the community.

Download the Multiply C&V app today and start learning! Or to access online, click [here](#).



Multiply 

FREE Multiply C&V app

For parents, professionals and educators to level up their skills

Scan the QR code to download the app or visit: multiplycandv.nimbl.uk and select Register



  Funded by UK Government



News in Brief

Dragonflies playgroup – Dinas Powys

Dragonflies playgroup opened in September 2024 and is situated on Dinas Powys Junior School site.

Indoors Dragonflies has a large open playroom with a spacious outdoor area, where children can explore nature and engage in creative play. We follow a child –centered approach that encourages curiosity and hands on learning. Dragonflies provide a nurturing environment where every child can explore, learn and thrive.



About the Vale School Governors Association (VSGA)

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

VGSA Management Committee 2024-26

The Management Committee is comprised of elected Governors plus the two parent Governor Representative (one each from the Primary and Secondary Sectors)

No	Name	School
1	Mr Peter Cate (Vice-Chair)	Jenner Park Primary
2	Mr John Duxbury	St David's CiW Primary School
3	Ms Jodie Evans	Fairfield Primary & and Gladstone Primary
4	Mr G Griffiths	Ysgol Gwaun y Nant & Ysgol Sant Curig
5	Mrs Jackie Griffiths	Fairfield Primary and St Joseph's RC Primary
6	Cllr Andrew Hennessey	Rhws Primary and St Helen's RC Primary
7	Mrs Sarah Jenkins	St Andrews Major C/W Primary and St Cyres Comprehensive
8	Mr Gordon Kemp	St Nicholas CiW Primary and South Point Primary
9	Dr Chris Lee	St Cyres Comprehensive
10	Cllr Julie Lynch-Wilson	Llantwit Major Comprehensive and St Athan Primary School
11	Dr Martin Price (Chair)	St.Richard Gwyn RC High School
12	Mr Jasper Roberts	Llantwit Major Comprehensive and St Illtyd Primary
13	Mrs Terri Vaughan-Taylor	Cowbridge Comprehensive
14	Mr Owen Williams	Ysgol Sant Baruc
15	Cllr Mark Wilson	Fairfield Primary & Victoria Primary

Parent Governor Representatives (PGR's)

Parent Governor Representative Primary – L Barrowclough- Llandough Primary School
 Parent Governor Representative Secondary – G van de Burgt – Whitmore High School

Vale School Governors' Association

NEWSLETTER

Issue 60 Spring Term 2025



Vale of Glamorgan Governor Support Unit

Email: governors@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Contact Details:

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Senior Governor Support Officer
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Email: fwright@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

VSGA has an email address that you may contact them on. It's VSGA@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or alternatively you can contact VSGA by post at: VSGA Governor Support Unit, Learning & Skills Directorate, Vale of Glamorgan Council Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry CF63 4RU



**Wishing all Governors a
Very Happy Easter**