# Vale School Governors' Association

## NEWSLETTER

Issue 62 Autumn Term 2025

## In this Issue:

### Contents


| | |
|---|---|
| A note from the Chair | 2 |
| Introducing the Vale of Glamorgan School Improvement Team | 3 |
| Central South Consortium (CSC) – Update and Information | 4 |
| Welsh Government Announcement: Review of Governing Bodies | 6 |
| Refreshed Guidance for Governing Bodies on the establishment and operation of school councils. | 8 |
| Anti-racism training in Schools – Governor Update | 10 |
| Directorate of Learning and Skills – Autumn Term Update | 11 |
| Vale of Glamorgan Schools Eco Directory Launch | 13 |
| School Holiday Dates | 15 |
| VSGA and Governor Support Unit Information | 17 |

Vale School Governors' Association

NEWSLETTER

Issue 62 Autumn Term 2025

# Note from the Chair

These are difficult times to be a School Governor in Wales in general; and the Vale of Glamorgan in particular. A record number of Governors tuned into the Vale School Governors' Education Briefing early in December. They saw a presentation on the parlous state of funding for schools. If you missed it you can watch a relevant presentation from the Start Well Scrutiny Committee on the Vale's website.

Summarising, the position in Wales as a whole is that half of secondary schools and a third of primary schools are in deficit this financial year. In the Vale the figures are worse – three quarters of secondary schools and two thirds of primary schools are in deficit. This is a major problem for the Vale of Glamorgan Council, as schools represent forty percent of the Council's overall budget. Council reserves are finite and going down.

Governors are at the front line, because they ultimately sign off the recovery plan for recouping the shortfall over a number of years and are also responsible for developing a realistic budget for their schools for next year.

Please be mindful of the stress on your Headteachers and Senior staff as they attempt to square the circle of providing an adequate and safe education for the pupils in your care, when there is not enough money to go around. There is help and support from Vale staff, but Governors need to look after the wellbeing of hard-pressed dedicated staff.

There is an election for the Senedd looming in May 2026. Please make sure you ask some searching questions of those who are seeking your vote. Decent funding for schools in Wales should be a high priority in manifestos and vital for the new Government,

May I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year despite the financial vicissitudes.

**Dr Martin Price**

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

Vale School Governors' Association

NEWSLETTER

Issue 62 Autumn Term 2025

# A warm welcome to the new

# Vale of Glamorgan School Improvement Team

At the start of this academic year, our new School Improvement Team joined us from Central South Consortium.

Leading the team is Carys Pritchard **(cpritchard@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk),** who many of you will already know through Education Updates and Briefing Sessions. Joining Carys are four dedicated School Improvement Officers, each working closely with a group of schools:

- **Jude Davies (email: judavies@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)** Supporting Barry Island Primary, High Street Primary, Romilly Primary, Gladstone Primary, Palmerston Primary, Gwenfo CIW Primary, All Saints CIW Primary, St Helen's RC Primary, St Andrew's Major CIW Primary, St Joseph's RC Primary, Cogan Primary, Fairfield Primary, Evenlode Primary, Llandough Primary and Dinas Powys Primary.
- **Carys Amos (email: croberts-amos@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)** Supporting Ysgol Pen y Garth, Ysgol Sant Baruc, Ysgol Iolo Morganwg, Ysgol Sant Curig, Ysgol Gynradd Gwaun y Nant, Ysgol Gymraeg Dewi Sant, Llantwit Major School, St Cyres Comprehensive School, Whitmore High School, Pencoedtre High School, St Richard Gwyn RC High School, Stanwell School, Cowbridge School, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg and Ysgol y Deri.
- **Sue Prosser (email: sjprosser@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)** Supporting Colcot Primary, Holton Primary, Jenner Park Primary, Cadoxton Primary, Oakfield Primary, Albert Primary, Sully Primary, Victoria Primary, St Athan Primary, St Illtyd Primary, Ysgol y Ddraig and Wick & Marcross CIW primary.
- **Julie Ann Morgan (email: juliemorgan@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)** Supporting South Point Primary, Llanfair Primary, Llangan Primary, Y Bont Faen Primary, St Nicholas CIW Primary, Peterston Super Ely CIW Primary, St Bride's CIW Primary, Pendoylan CIW Primary, Llansannor CIW Primary, St David's CIW Primary and Rhws Primary.

The officers are already actively engaging with schools and will play a key role in delivering governor training across the Vale of Glamorgan.

Vale School Governors' Association

NEWSLETTER

Issue 62 Autumn Term 2025

# Central South Consortium – Update and Information

Central South Consortium (CSC) is now the commissioned service of the local authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf, and the Vale of Glamorgan, providing professional learning (PL) and support to schools across the region, with a commissioning agreement being finalised by the LAs across the region to meet local needs. CSC have also been commissioned to support statutory and additional functions in LAs including NQT Induction, Outdoor Education and SACRE / SAC.

**National Professional Learning and Support**

Schools will be able to access national professional learning (PL), support and resources in specific areas from a range of providers, including: Dysgu (the new national body), Welsh Government (National Programmes), National Centre for Learning Welsh, Adnodd, DARPL and the Curriculum for Wales Grant Support Programme. CSC will work in partnership with these organisations to ensure coherence in the provision of bespoke professional learning to address specific regional and local needs.

**Regional Professional Learning Offer**

CSC will focus on a reduced but targeted remit, providing professional learning and support in the following areas across the 3–16 continuum and post-16 education:

- Teaching and learning, e.g. assessment for learning, learner effectiveness, etc.
- Curriculum design and progression
- Six Areas of Learning and Experience and their subjects/disciplines (Areas)
- Three cross-curricular skills
- Qualifications related to the above
- Outdoor Education
- Cymraeg
- Leadership at all levels
- NQT induction
- Teaching assistants.

The CSC regional PL offer for the Autumn Term is now available to browse and book on the new CSC website - www.CSC.cymru. The CSC Professional Learning and Support Compendium is now live on the website and copies have been delivered to schools. The Compendium includes details of the regional PL offer with links to book onto the programmes, events and network, as well as links to resources and the CSC online communities

**Bespoke Support**

In addition to the published offer, schools will be able to access bespoke support upon request. This bespoke support takes a number of different forms:

- One-off coaching and mentoring sessions with school leaders and/or practitioners focused on a specific area of school improvement.
- A menu of bespoke PL delivered in schools, for example as INSET days or twilight sessions.
- A planned series of bespoke PL and support sessions agreed in partnership with the school and the school improvement officer focused on a specific priority for improvement.

**There is no cost to schools for the professional learning and support provided by CSC. However, schools are responsible for any supply cover costs.**

# Review of school governing bodies in Wales – terms of reference

School governing bodies in Wales have a wide and varied range of responsibilities set out in legislation and Welsh Government guidance. They play a pivotal role in the school system, supporting learners and school staff. The school system in Wales has seen vast reforms over the last decade, often with additional or amended duties imposed on governing bodies, but the role of school governing bodies has not altered in any fundamental way.

Calls for a review of governing bodies in Wales have come from local authorities and the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

**In October 2025, the Cabinet Secretary for Education announced a review of school governing bodies in Wales and the terms of reference are detailed below for your information.**

A review of school governing bodies in Wales will be undertaken by Welsh Government officials. The review will be supported by a reference group to provide information, views and advice It will:

- consider the findings and recommendations from previous work conducted in this area, including the Estyn thematic review from 2023
- provide advice and challenge on scope, methodology and emerging findings and options
- act as a critical friend, ensuring the review is balanced, evidence-based and reflects the perspectives of key stakeholders
- ensure that members represent the perspectives of their sector/organisation while contributing to collective consensus
- support coherence and credibility of recommendations, considering alignment with wider education reform
- contribute to identifying risks, opportunities and practical implications for implementation. The reference group will be representative of the school sector in Wales and will not make policy decisions or recommendations, but will provide input to inform potential options and actions for the work.

## Scope

The review will focus primarily on examining the effectiveness, accountability, appropriateness and support mechanisms of school governing bodies in Wales, including how this is set out in legislation. In doing so, and in exploring the full range of responsibilities conferred on governing bodies, the following themes will be covered;

**Structure and roles**

- Composition of governing bodies (representation of parents, staff, community, LA nominee, etc)
- Clarity and appropriateness of roles and responsibilities between governors, headteachers and local authorities

**Effectiveness and impact**

- How governing bodies contribute to raising educational standards
- The quality of challenge and support provided to school leadership
- Impact on school improvement and learner outcomes

**Support and training**

- Availability, accessibility and effectiveness of training and guidance for governors
- Quality of clerking and administrative support
- Consistency of support across different LAs and regions

**Accountability and oversight**

- Compliance with statutory duties (safeguarding, finance, curriculum, inclusion)
- How governing bodies are held to account by LAs, Estyn and Welsh Government

**Recruitment and retention**

- Process for recruiting governors (including diversity and representation)
- Retention, workload and barriers to effective participation

**Best practice and innovation.**

- Examples of high-performing governing bodies and innovative practices
- Opportunities for collaboration between schools and governing bodies

**Timeframe**

It is envisaged that the review will take around 6-9 months with the aim of providing a report for the Welsh Ministers by summer 2026.

# Refreshed Guidance for Governing Bodies on the establishment and operation of school councils

**(This guidance has been refreshed, but does not impose any additional requirements on schools)**

## Establishment of school councils

Every maintained school in Wales, with the exception of maintained nursery and infant schools, is required to establish a school council. The headteacher has a duty to ensure that the council meets at least six times each academic year and that these meetings take place at regular intervals wherever possible. This helps to keep the council active and ensures that learners have frequent opportunities to raise issues and discuss ideas.

## Membership of school councils and election of members

School council membership must consist only of registered pupils, with at least one elected representative from Year 3 and every year group above. Elections must be held by secret ballot, with all pupils able to vote for candidates in their own year group, ensuring that staff and governors do not influence who is chosen. Councils should reflect the diversity of the school and be genuinely representative of all learners.

Schools with an Additional Learning Needs (ALN) resource base must also include at least one pupil from that base, appointed sensitively to promote inclusion and avoid stigmatisation. Although there are no rules on the size of the council or the timing of elections, many schools choose to hold elections

## Matters to be considered by school councils

The regulations do not stipulate what school councils should consider. However, suggested issues which might be of interest include:

- Improvements to the school environment
- Developing resources and facilities
- Diversity & inclusion
- Improvements to learning

## Engagement with pupils, the headteacher, and the governing body

A school council provides learners with a forum to discuss issues about their school, education, or any matters they feel are important, giving them a meaningful voice in decisions that affect them. It offers an inclusive and representative way for pupils to raise issues with the headteacher and governing body. Under the regulations, both the headteacher and governing body must consider any matters brought forward by the school council and provide a response.

### Resources for school councils

The governing body and headteacher may provide the school council with resources to support its work, helping to give it status and operate effectively. These resources may be physical, financial, or staff support. It is recommended that the school council's constitution sets out clear rules for how resources are used. Under the regulations, any request for resources from the school council must be considered by the governing body and headteacher, and a response must be given.

### Associate pupil governors and school council links with the governing body

The headteacher must allow the school council to nominate one or two members from Years 11–13 to serve as associate pupil governors. The governing body must appoint these nominees unless they are disqualified under Schedule 5 of the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005.

Associate pupil governors act as a link between the school council and the governing body, sharing learners' views and feeding information back to the council. The governing body must consider any matters raised by the school council and provide a response, including written replies when issues are submitted in writing.

*For further information on the Welsh Government guidance of governing bodies on the establishment and operation of school councils, please click **here***

# Anti-Racism – Governor Update and Training

We are very grateful to one of our Governors, Leon Andrews (Evenlode Primary) who has been kind enough to deliver Anti-Racism training to several governing bodies and parents this year on behalf of DARPL (Diversity and Anti-Racist Professional Learning) – a community of practice founded in 2021 which has been funded by the Welsh Government and established at Cardiff Metropolitan University. DARPL – Diversity and Anti-Racism Professional Learning

DARPL is the lead organisation in Wales in regards to critical anti-racist professional learning and leadership. They are running a DARPL Governors Workshop on Tuesday 3rd February 2026 17:00-19:00 and you can book your attendance via their online calendar here DARPL Calendar You may need to sign in/sign up to DARPL to book on the session. We will also be offering Governors the opportunity to attend a DARPL training session as part of our Vale of Glamorgan Governor Training Programme in March 2026. Further details will follow in the New Year.

The Governors workshop will unpick anti-racism and explore actions that can be taken at a strategic senior level. The session looks at organisational culture, the impact of racism on the well-being and lives of Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic people and at policies and procedures that may adversely affect those from non-White backgrounds. It's important that anti-racism is driven at a strategic level, to ensure that all educational settings affect positive change and improvement.

# Learning and Skills Autumn Term Update

In 2022, Welsh Government announced funding of £70m for a Childcare & Early Years Capital programme across Wales. The purpose of this capital funding is to support and improve the existing childcare and Flying Start infrastructure. The main objectives for the capital programme are to ensure that the childcare sector in Wales is strengthened and supports the programme for Welsh Government commitments.

A snapshot of some of the projects we have been developing on School sites to provide further childcare provision across the Vale include:

**Cylch Meithin Pen-Y-Garth, Penarth-** Proposed plans agreed to accommodate 30 registered places and potentially accommodate sessional, full day care and wrap around care. The business case was submitted to Welsh Government 24th June 2025.

**Cadoxton School refurbishment**- Contractors started on site 27th June and run until December 2025. The building will accommodate 2-year-old offer and childcare offer. It is envisaged that the appointed commissioned setting will operate from 8.00am-6.00pm.

## Bumblebees, Colcot extension

Contractors started on site the 4th August 2025 and are due to complete 9th October 2025.

The extension will accommodate children aged 1-2 years which will free up childcare places for two/ three-year-olds in the main building.

The setting will continue to be run by Little Inspirations and continue to be called 'Bumblebees.'

For any queries on any of the above, please contact Claire on:
cmhaydon@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

# Vale of Glamorgan Schools Eco-Directory Launch

We're excited to announce the launch of our **Eco-Directory** a comprehensive resource designed to help schools become more sustainable while reducing operational costs.

The directory focuses on nine essential areas of sustainability, providing practical guidance, trusted suppliers, and actionable tips:

- **Carbon Reporting:** Tools and advice to measure, monitor, and reduce your school's carbon footprint.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Proven strategies to lower energy consumption and cut utility bills.
- **Water Conservation:** Practical steps to reduce water usage and associated costs.
- **Waste Management:** Solutions for recycling, reusing, and minimising waste.
- **Travel:** Ideas and support to promote sustainable travel options for staff and students.
- **Food:** Guidance on healthy and sustainable food choices.
- **Green Space & Biodiversity:** Initiatives to create greener spaces and support local wildlife.
- **Community Benefits:** Ways to engage parents, students, and the local community in sustainability efforts.
- **New Net Zero Buildings:** Information on designing and constructing energy-efficient, future-proof facilities.

In addition, the Eco-Directory includes details on funding and grants available to support your sustainability projects, as well as a Calendar of Events —a year-round schedule of key sustainability and environmental events. These fun, educational activities allow schools to actively participate, inspiring students and celebrating progress.

Whether your goal is to reduce costs, improve environmental impact, or strengthen community engagement, this resource provides everything you need to take meaningful action.

Start exploring today and take the first step toward a greener future for your school.

Access the Eco-Directory Now

# School Holiday Dates 2026/2027

| Term | Begin | Half term | | End | No. of School Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Begin | End | | |
| Autumn 2026 | Tue 1 Sept 2026 | Monday 26 Oct 2026 | Friday 30 Oct 2026 | Friday 18 Dec 2026 | 74 |
| Spring 2027 | Monday 4 Jan 2027 | Monday 8 Feb 2027 | Friday 12 Feb 2027 | Friday 19 Mar 2027 | 50 |
| Summer 2027 | Monday 5 April 2027 | Monday 31 May 2027 | Friday 4 Jun 2027 | *Tuesday 20 July 2027 | 71 |
| | | | | TOTAL | **195** |

i) **Tue 1 Sept 2026, *Monday 19 & Tuesday 20 July 2027** will be designated INSET days for **all** LEA Maintained Schools. The remaining two INSET days to be taken will be at the discretion of each individual school following appropriate consultation with staff. ***It is intended that these INSET Days will either be taken on Mon 19 & Tue 20 July 2027 or at an alternative time for example in the form of twilight sessions.**

All schools will be closed on **Monday 3 May 2027** for the May Day Bank Holiday.

Significant dates:

**Christmas**

Friday 25 December 2026

**Easter:**

Good Friday 26 March 2027 & Easter Monday 29 March 2027

**May Bank Holidays:**

Monday 3 May 2027 & Monday 31 May 2027

# School Holiday Dates 2027/2028

| Term | Begin | Half term | | End | No. of School Days |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Begin | End | | |
| Autumn 2027 | Wed 1 Sept 2027 | Monday 25 Oct 2027 | Friday 29 Oct 2027 | Friday 17 Dec 2027 | 73 |
| Spring 2028 | Tuesday 4 Jan 2028 | Monday 21 Feb 2028 | Friday 25 Feb 2028 | Friday 7 Apr 2028 | 64 |
| Summer 2028 | Monday 24 April 2028 | Monday 29 May 2028 | Friday 2 Jun 2028 | Thursday 20 July 2028 | 58 |
| | | | | TOTAL | **195** |

ii) **Wed 1 Sept 2027** will be a designated INSET day for **all** LEA Maintained Schools. The remaining four INSET days to be taken will be at the discretion of each individual school following appropriate consultation with staff.

All schools will be closed on **Monday 1 May 2028** for the May Day Bank Holiday.

Significant dates:

**Christmas:**

Saturday 25 December 2027

**Easter:**

Good Friday 14 April 2028 & Easter Monday 17 April 2028

**May Bank Holidays:**

Monday 1 May 2028 & Monday 29 May 2028

# Vale School Governors' Association

# NEWSLETTER

Issue 62 Autumn Term 2025

## 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 | Gladstone Primary and Ysgol Pen y Garth |
| 4 | Mr Gwynne Griffiths | Ysgol Gwaun y Nant & Ysgol Sant Curig |
| 5 | Mrs Jackie Griffiths | St Joseph's RC Primary |
| 6 | Cllr Andrew Hennessey | Rhws Primary and St Helen's RC Primary |
| 7 | Mrs Sarah Jenkins | 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 | Mrs Ghislaine van der Burgt | FGB Pencoedtre and Whitmore High Schools |
| 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 – K Riddick – FGB Pencoedtre and Whitmore High Schools

## Vale of Glamorgan Governor Support Unit

**Email: governors@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk**

**Contact Details:**

**John Sparks**
**Head of Governor Support and School Complaints**
**Tel; 01446 709106**
**Email: JSparks@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk**

**Francesca Wright**
**Senior Governor Support Officer**
**Tel; 01446 709125**
**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