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Note from the Chair

One of my daughters has graduated from taking long rambles in Bannau Brycheiniog and other parts of Wales to scrambling over rocks and now full-blown mountaineering. She is by nature risk-aware and always follows recognised safety rules – dressed appropriately – well-equipped – not on her own – and so on. This does not mean that accidents can't happen, and she appears to be doing a consumer comparison of the volunteer mountain rescue teams around the UK. Last year she was carried off the Beacons after breaking her ankle, slipping on some ice, and this weekend, the experienced instructor she was roped to near Glencoe in Scotland fell a considerable distance, fortunately only breaking a wrist. This time a dramatic helicopter rescue was required. My daughter was unscathed.

Why am I telling you this? Because to continue the theme from last terms newsletter, finances for schools in the Vale and in Wales as a whole are in a mess. Schools are struggling; Governors are fraught; Headteachers are highly stressed. What we need is our own "Mountain Rescue team."

Providentially, there is an election for the Senedd in May. Welsh schools need more funding. Please lobby your candidates to increase the money for Education and for Local Government as a whole. I find it surprising that none of the political parties seem to have picked up on the parlous state of so many schools. I am also disappointed that local social media posts are preoccupied with potholes and the poor state of our roads and not on the need to invest in the education of the children who are the future citizens of Wales. Use your vote wisely and choose the politicians who will be our Mountain Rescue team.

Most importantly, please look after our Headteachers. The stresses and strains they are under are really apparent. Governors have a vital role here to listen, support, and bring their lived experience to help our senior staff.

And please remember the dedicated volunteer mountain rescue teams who are always in need of financial support. Please make a donation if you can. Oh, and can I suggest your Health and Safety Governor checks out your school procedures. We can't be too careful!

May I wish you a Happy Easter despite the financial issues.

Dr Martin Price

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



School Improvement Partnership Programme

In October 2025, the Vale of Glamorgan officially launched the School Improvement Partnership Programme (SIPP) with all headteachers. The local authority (LA) worked closely with a group of headteachers to design this model, and those involved have played a pivotal role in providing regular updates to all schools and offering valuable feedback throughout the process.

Collaboration

The SIPP is designed to create a self-improving system, with all schools expected to engage in both vertical and horizontal collaborations:

- Vertical collaboration: schools within the same locality, particularly primary schools with their associated secondary school, work together to support learner progression across the 3–16 continuum.
- Horizontal collaboration: Schools with similar age ranges (e.g., primary with primary, secondary with secondary) collaborate to develop joint approaches to evaluation and improvement planning. In some cases, horizontal collaboration may need to operate across local authorities to enable similar setting, such as special, Welsh medium and faith schools, to work within the same sector

LA Priorities

In the Vale of Glamorgan, the initial focus for the vertical collaboration work will be on reading. This decision is informed by:

- primary schools reporting communication skill gaps on entry
- transition data highlighting literacy challenges
- secondary schools reporting challenges with pupils being unable to access curriculum
- eFSM outcomes showing disparities in reading and progress data
- findings of the recent Estyn thematic review on reading, and the focus on reading in school inspections for 2025–26
- Bangor University research linking reading ability to behaviour

The initial priority for horizontal collaboration will be teaching and learning. This decision is informed by:

- themes emerging from recent Estyn inspection reports highlight the need for consistent, high-quality teaching practices
- progress and examination data of learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM), where gaps in attainment remain a concern and are getting wider

The Education Endowment Fund (EEF) is supporting the facilitation of the horizontal collaboration.

Collaborative Partnership Board

To support and guide this work, a Collaborative Partnership Board will be established. The Board will meet termly and will include:

- representatives from each vertical collaboration
- LA Officers
- members of the School Improvement Team
- Representative from Central South Consortium

This board helps coordinate efforts, share expertise, and identify areas needing support or wider dissemination.

The success of the School Improvement Partnership Programme depends on a shared vision and collective action. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership to develop this school-to-school collaborative approach.

Welsh Government: School Improvement Guidance

Published in January 2026, the School Improvement Guidance sets out how schools, local authorities, Estyn and diocesan authorities should work together to raise standards. At its core is a clear principle: improvement is a shared responsibility.

The guidance provides the national framework underpinning the School Improvement Partnership Programme (SIPP) and establishes clear expectations for a collaborative approach to improvement. It defines the roles and responsibilities of school leaders, governing bodies, local authorities and Estyn, and emphasises collaboration as a key driver for improving learner progress and outcomes. The guidance document also sets out expectations for robust self-evaluation and evidence-informed planning - elements that are essential in helping schools reflect, identify priorities and work together to deliver sustained improvement.

For further information about this guidance, please see: [School improvement guidance - Hwb](#)

New ICO guidance - sharing data to safeguard children

Our new guidance for the education sector on data sharing for safeguarding is now available:

[Sharing information to safeguard children and young people in the education sector in the UK | ICO / Rhannu gwybodaeth er mwyn diogelu plant a phobl ifanc yn y sector addysg yn y Deyrnas Unedig.](#)

Our aim with this new guidance is to give staff in education settings confidence to share information to protect children and young people from harm: You will not get in trouble with ICO for sharing data to protect children and young people, even if your safeguarding concerns turn out to be unfounded, so long as you follow this guidance.

The education sector is broad, and this guidance is for:

- schools and colleges in the public and private sectors;
- universities and other higher education organisations which have students who are under the age of 18, as well as activities such as summer schools hosted by external providers;
- nurseries, in both public and private sectors; and
- out-of-school settings, such as pre- and after-school clubs and other groups and activities.

Our guidance explains the data protection aspects of sharing information to safeguard children and young people; it's not a guide to safeguarding practice. However, we have included information and links on the safeguarding legislative and policy context in each part of the UK which we hope you will find useful.

The guidance also includes a series of case studies which are applicable across the UK.

The bilingual resources for our related [Think, Check, Share](#) campaign (see example above) are equally appropriate to support any comms you may wish to do in sharing this with your stakeholders.

Communities for Work Plus and CELT +

Communities for Work Plus and CELT+ work in partnership to provide a wide range of employment, training, and funding support for individuals and families across the Vale of Glamorgan.

Our support goes beyond employability and includes application and digital help, housing advice, mental health support, and benefits guidance, helping people overcome challenges that may prevent them from learning or moving into work.

Our dedicated support hub, The Pod, based in Barry at Golau Caredig, Broad Street (CF62 7AZ), operates as a one-stop shop for support, open Monday to Thursday, 10:00am–4:00pm and Friday, 10:00am–3:00pm, with a drop-in model accessible to all.

We deliver a range of free courses and training opportunities to help individuals upskill and progress, working closely with trusted partners including Adult Learning Wales, POBL, Hafod, Citizens Advice, Trussell Food Bank, DWP, Mind, Business Wales, and many others.

This joined-up approach allows us to offer practical, accessible support that benefits pupils, parents, and the wider community.



Learning and Skills- Spring 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 Meithrin Pen-Y-Garth, Penarth

The architect has prepared proposed plans to accommodate 30 registered childcare places. The business case was submitted to Welsh Government on 24 June 2025 and received approval in November 2025. While commencement is anticipated to align with the start of the next financial year, the exact timescales remain uncertain due to the requirement to obtain planning permission and sustainable drainage approval.



Bumblebees- extension to existing building

The contractors commenced work on site on 4 August 2025 and successfully completed the project on 10 October 2025. The works included an extension to the existing building. Following completion, the setting remains operational and continues to be managed by Little Inspirations, ensuring continuity of care and services for families.



Cadoxton School Refurbishment

Contractors commenced work on site on 27 June 2025, with an original completion date scheduled for December 2025. However, the project timeline has been extended, and completion is now expected by the end of January 2026. Internal works have been finalised, with final decorations and snagging currently underway. Delays were primarily caused by the redesign of the external access ramp and the need to secure Building Control approval.

Upon completion, the commissioned childcare setting, *Little Inspirations*, is anticipated to operate Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., for 51 weeks each year, providing consistent, high-quality childcare services.



Period Dignity Grant - School Ordering

The Welsh Government provides funding to the Vale of Glamorgan via the Period Dignity Grant and the purpose of the grant is to provide free period products to women, girls and people who have periods in schools and to those on low incomes in the community. The Vale of Glamorgan Council has recently undergone a tender process and as a result will only be ordering products from 2 suppliers, the main supplier being Grace & Green.

Each school within the Vale can order period products for use within their school, up to approx. £1000 (funding dependent). The process for ordering is as follows:

1. Fill out the attached Microsoft Forms Schools order form

[Vale of Glamorgan Period Dignity Scheme - Schools – Fill in form](#)

2. Once the order is assessed the order will be placed by the Period Dignity team and delivered directly to the School by the Supplier.
3. Once delivery is received please let the Period Dignity team know on perioddignity@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk so that payment can be made.
4. If Uniform (pants, tights, skirts, trousers etc) is required the school will have to place this order once agreed by the Period Dignity Team and reimbursement of funds to the school account will take place.
5. Please be aware that if orders are placed without prior agreement then the school will be liable for funding of these items

The Vale of Glamorgan is proud of the fact that 100% of the period products that we order are Eco-Friendly so would appreciate schools adhering to this policy.

Please be aware that any orders placed after the 13th February 2026 may not get placed until the start of the new Financial year on 1st April 2026.

Learn Welsh the Vale to offer more choice

After almost ten years Learn Welsh the Vale are pleased to announce there will be even more choice for those finding online learner easier. We have found with busy schedules many of our funded places are requested for Zoom courses.

Learn Welsh the Vale is now part of the Learn Welsh Ceredigion, Powys & Carmarthenshire team so that opens access to Vale governors and all Vale educations staff to funded places on a much wider range of courses. We will of course still offer the highest quality courses including those in local buildings. Our tutors will still be providing those courses with an expanded team offering a course to suit everyone at all levels online.

We hope this change will also benefit the Welsh and English medium school parents who sign up to courses with us every year. Many tell us the courses are helping them support their children's progress in Welsh. Now we can reach even more of them. With a summer course and an expanded programme in September we are looking forward to hearing from you. If you already know some Welsh, get in touch now and we can see if you can join a class that has already started.

Our new contact details are

Email on learnwelsh@aber.ac.uk

Phone us on 0800 876 6975



dysgucymraeg.cymru
learnwelsh.cymru

Safeguarding Training

Safeguarding training for governors is available via e-learning this term.

Governors should undertake the Welsh Government safeguarding e-learning modules 1 and 2, which are available via the links below. Once you have completed this training, you must inform your clerk to the governing body, so that it can be added to your training record.

Whilst this training isn't mandatory, it is strongly recommended that governors should complete this training at 1-2 year intervals during their term of office.

[Overview - Introduction to safeguarding for school staff: Keeping learners safe module 1 - Resources - Hwb](#)

[Overview - Safeguarding roles and responsibilities for school staff: Keeping learners safe module 2 - Resources - Hwb](#)



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

For the attention of all School Governors and Headteachers

I am writing to consult on proposed changes to the Vale of Glamorgan's Finance Scheme for Schools, in accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act of 1998 and the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010. You can view the current scheme here [Finance Scheme for Schools 2025-26 English](#)

The intended changes from the current version for 2026/27 are listed below.

1. **Statements** - References to "Statements" have been replaced with "School-led IDPs".
2. **VAT** - Section 7 advises that schools must consult and adhere to the Council's VAT manual which is available on the Council's internal website.
3. **IR35** – Section 7 advises that schools have a licence with the Council's tax advice provider for training and support with IR35 queries.
4. **Unofficial Funds template** - The template for the audit of unofficial/private funds (previously appendix 8) has been removed from this document, as a template is included within the separate guidance for unofficial funds which is referenced within the document.
5. **Foundation Schools** - References to Foundation Schools have been removed.
6. **Repairs and Maintenance** - Appendix 4 "School Responsibilities for Repairs and maintenance" has been reformatted.
7. **Cheque Book Schools** - Now that all schools are operating on Fusion and the Vale of Glamorgan is no longer operating with Cheque book schools, the scheme has been adapted throughout to remove references to chequebook schools and related bank accounts. This is reflected in
 - a. Section 3 – Instalments of the Budget Share
 - b. Section 4 – Treatment of Surplus and Deficit balances
 - c. Section 5 – Income

8. **Section 2.8 – Submission of budget plans** – This section has been updated, and the following three paragraphs have been added:
- a. **Paragraph 2.8.3** – “Any school that is unable to produce a balanced budget for the current financial year, will be required to provide a budget recovery plan detailing how this deficit will be eliminated over a period not exceeding five years.”
 - b. **Paragraph 2.8.4** – “All schools are required to provide a three-year budget plan, however schools in a deficit position may provide a five-year recovery plan where they are unable to demonstrate full budget recovery in three years.”
 - c. **Paragraph 2.8.5** – “Failure to set a balanced recovery plan may lead to the issue of a notice of concern with accompanying restrictions on powers of expenditure or to the withdrawal of a schools delegated budget.”
9. **Section 5.6 - Income Collection** – This section has been updated, and the following three paragraphs have been added:
- a. **Paragraph 5.6.2** – includes the addition “Schools must raise invoices using the corporate income management systems and procedures.”
 - b. **Paragraph 5.6.4** – “Schools are responsible to pursue outstanding debts using the Council’s debt recovery procedures”. Replaces the previous wording of paragraphs 5.6.4 and 5.6.5.
 - c. **Paragraph 5.6.5** – “Rules for the writing off of outstanding debts are covered under section 2.6.” replaces the previous wording of paragraph 5.6.6.
10. **Section 2.6 – Writing off Debts** – This section has been rewritten, to remove the requirement of the approval of the Section 151 Officer to write-off school debts below the value of £5,000. Debts in excess of £5,000 can only be written off by the Section 151 officer, furthermore debts of more than £10,000 will need Cabinet approval.

The revised Finance Scheme will be discussed at the forthcoming Schools Budget Forum on Wednesday 25th March 2026.

If you have any queries, concerns, or objections regarding the revised scheme, please can you email me directly by no later than 20th April 2026.

Nicola Monckton, Finance Manager

NMonckton@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

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

