



## SUMMER CONFERENCE REPORT

### Date and Venue

The conference was held on Saturday 12th July 2008 at Powys County Hall, Llandrindod Wells.

### Participants

Local Governor Associations and groups from the whole of Wales were invited to send up to three representatives to the conference. In addition LEA Directors of Education and Councillors with an Education portfolio (or their representatives) were invited to attend. Along with other guests a total of 67 delegates attended the event.

### Theme

The theme of the conference was “The School Effectiveness Framework” which has been developed by the Welsh Assembly Government. The School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) sets out the vision for putting the school effectiveness reform into action. The Framework is based on tri-level reform (the whole of the education community - schools, local authorities and the Assembly Government) working collaboratively in order to maximise individuals’ learning and to extend opportunities. The Framework is underpinned by five themes: systems thinking, bilingualism, high performance culture, equality and supportive and interdependent.

Presentations were given by Dr Bill Maxwell, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales and Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills.



**Hugh Patrick**  
Chair  
Governors Wales

**Jane Hutt, AM**  
Minister for Children,  
Education and Lifelong  
Learning and Skills

**Jane Morris**  
Acting Director  
Governors Wales

The conference commenced with Dr. Bill Maxwell.

Bill Maxwell explained that a quality improvement system should be supported by the following four 'pillars':

#### Performance Data

- start point for fair comparisons / benchmarks to be made
- needs to be accurate
- the measures need to add value
- use for self-evaluation
- needs to be analysed intelligently
- needs to be used to make decisions that will influence the future

#### Quality indicators

- interpret data in the broad context
- must promote learning
- must be used to set standards
- must enable robust self-evaluation

#### Professional workforce of professional practitioners

- emphasis on training and development
- continuous professional development
- exchange of best practice
- monitor and evaluate outcomes
- strong influence on school performance
- challenging the school management team

#### Independent external inspection/review

- provides moderation and a 'reality check'
- prevents over-estimation / under-estimation from self-evaluation
- checks that there are strong links between strategy implementation and desired results

Estyn will contribute to all four pillars through the use of data and quality indicators and promoting alignment of organisational aspects, review mechanisms and results.

The Mission is to raise standards of quality education. This is achieved through adding value by

- public accountability – robust comparisons between schools
- input to inform national policy – use of evidence and data collection to analyse the issues and help to direct resources
- providing improvement across the system
- distilling good practice
- building evaluation skills

The inspection cycle of 6 years ends in 2010. Estyn is currently reviewing the changes required to update the approach. The review will take account of what structure an inspection will have, what the grading system will look like, who will undertake the process and what type of feedback will be given. Some challenges include how to get the balance between support and challenge right and how to involve all key stakeholders.

In 2007 the first phase of the '2010 project' to review the inspection process began. The new Model will:

- deliver 'citizen focus' and help to 'make the connections'

- be based on improving performance
- facilitate working *with* schools

Schools will be responsible for ensuring their quality (control) systems produce targeted results; Estyn will provide quality assurance through external review of the quality systems and results and help to direct schools towards best practice.

### **Workshop Sessions**

The workshop sessions were led by the Head of School Management and Effectiveness Division, Welsh Assembly Government and headteachers seconded to the Welsh Assembly Government as advisers, to forward the work of the School Effectiveness Framework.

The three workshop sessions concentrated on the practical implications of the School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) for school governors. Each of the three workshops were asked to identify five important implications for school governing bodies and were prefaced by the following brief presentation by each workshop leader:-

Governors need to consider the impact of the School Effectiveness framework in terms of its:

- Value for schools
- Moral purpose
- Effect on the professional learning community
- Requirement for additional capacity
- Long-term systems change
- Requirement to be regularly updated

A pilot starts in September supported by 30 Associates divided amongst 100 schools across each Consortia in Wales. Associates are seconded Headteachers and School Improvement Officers. Funding will be provided to schools from which the Associates are seconded to provide replacement staff and development opportunities for other staff. Associates will undergo intensive training in areas such as coaching – they will each provide support for three to four schools. Care will be taken to add capacity, not add workload. Associates will have a proven track record of school improvement and be respected as professionals.

**The groups were asked to identify five priority issues in the workshop sessions:**

#### **Group 1 (led by Mary Campbell, Principal, Michaelston Community College, Cardiff)**

- The sustainability and funding implications
- Raising 'governor' awareness to the 'concept' SEF
- The principle of SEF welcomed and supported
- The 'capacity' to drive through yet another initiative
- Aligning SEF to the Estyn programme

#### **Group 2 (led by Sue Jenkins, Headteacher, St Joseph's RC High School, Newport)**

- Help governors to identify the priority issues for themselves through self-evaluation aligned to the SEF
- Get schools and governors to share good practice
- Sustain the momentum that the SEF will provide (money and resources)
- Avoid 'initiative fatigue'
- Align the School Development Plan to the SEF

#### **Group 3 (led by Sylvia Lindoe, Head of School Management & Effectiveness Division, Welsh Assembly Government)**

- Need for governors and governing bodies to know more about SEF
- Need for governing bodies to know the implications for SEF
- Need for effective training on Framework for governors
- Important to remember children are the focus
- How can governors/governing bodies support Head and staff?

Other points/questions were raised in arriving at the five key issues as noted below:

- Appreciation of role of governors needs to be more overt
- Need for clarity regarding qualitative indicators and accountability
- Changing of ethos/culture necessary to promote wider moral purpose and make evident in professional learning communities
- Maintain the egalitarian ethos of schools in Wales (contrast England?)
- Each school has individual/different strengths which can be shared to “raise the bar” for all schools
- School governing bodies need professional expertise but have governors time? (worklife balance)
- Future of clusters/links with Associates? How long? Cost?
- Should the Welsh Assembly Government select future Associates? (not just train)
- How can we inform/help our governing body re: School Effectiveness Framework?
- At next governors’ meeting, agenda item 1 to be an explanation from the Head about the School Effectiveness Framework – What it is and why it is believed there is a necessity for it?
- What exactly does this mean for our school and how we can implement it to our best advantage?
- Sharing good practice – do that and all else follows!
- Funding implications
- Lack of governor involvement – Framework and Pilots
- Change relationships between schools
- Welcome and support the principle
- Make whole governing body fully aware of School Effectiveness Framework (including School Improvement Plan)
- Training issues for all stakeholders

### **Keynote address by Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills.**

Jane Hutt stressed that there were examples of excellence, good performance, ambition and enthusiasm in schools all around Wales. The key to a successful Wales was to share that good practice and encourage all schools to aspire to excellence in every aspect of their work.

Her main messages were:

- To be more ambitious for outcomes
- To concentrate on improving performance
- That SEF (and Estyn) will help to shape the future for schools
- That collaboration is key to the SEF – within schools, across schools, LEAs, WAG and other partners
- The pilot begins in September – a list of pilot schools has been published
- That associates (seconded Heads and School Improvement Officers) have been trained to coach and support both individual school and groups of schools.
- The SEF will be rolled out from Sept 2009 following evaluation of the pilots

- It is for the long term, not a short term fix
- The need to ensure that policies, strategies and Estyn inspection is aligned to the SEF

Governors need to:

- ask the critical questions
- discuss the impact of the SEF on the school
- align the School Development Plan
- self evaluate and improve

Following the Minister's address, a range of questions were asked ranging from funding issues, support and training to assist governors with the SEF etc.

### **Evaluation Questionnaires**

33 questionnaires were returned

The majority found the conference useful and informative.

A detailed analysis is given below:-

### **Did you find the conference useful & informative?**

Yes 27                      No 0                      To some extent 6

### **Some comments are provided below:**

- Raised awareness of detail and implications of School Effectiveness Framework
- Update on recent developments from Estyn and the School Effectiveness Framework
- Enhanced and improved my knowledge and awareness of developments into education in Wales. Also provided opportunity to meet with colleagues and discuss points of common interest
- The subject matter is the latest initiative to move education forward, therefore, the interaction between attendees is vital to understanding and putting it into perspective
- I don't feel that governors have had much input into the discussions on School Effectiveness Framework, so welcomed the conference today
- Good to take back information to school and to meet and see HMI and Minister. Governors need to be valued and this ensures it.

### **Which part of the conference was most useful? Some comments are provided below:**

- All was very informative. Discussion very helpful
- Exchange views with other governors and airing common problems – and guest speakers answering questions
- Having the opportunity to work through the subject matter helps allay fears and points the way forward
- Detailed insight into rationales that underpins the approach
- Workshops important – sharing ideas
- Welcomed the opportunity in the workshop to hear from one of the heads involved in developing the Framework
- Illuminating and informative: address and presentations. Good to talk and have in-depth discussion with other colleagues and governors
- Interesting to plug into other governors' view and experiences – Networking opportunities

### **Some general comments below:**

- I appreciate the support we currently receive from Governors Wales
- Literature, paperwork and handouts covered immediate needs
- Have not heard anything on the Framework until today
- Most interesting AGM and conference

### **Some thoughts in future topics for Governors Wales' conferences:**

- 14-19 Learning Pathways (2); Pupil Participation/PSE Framework
- UNCRC – Child rights and participation
- Legal aspects including staffing matters, Health & Safety; Maximisation of funding
- Finance for schools; DDA; New governors: How can we train? What are the first principles?
- Problems highlighted with legal advisors
- Provision of adequate resources for education (3)
- Associates; role of governors in School Improvement Plan
- Recruiting and keeping school governors

### **Conclusion**

The conference achieved its aim to enable conference participants to explore a number of issues relating to the School Effectiveness Framework looking at specifically:

- (1) the vision and purpose of the School Effectiveness Framework;
- (2) the role of school governors in the School Effectiveness Framework;
- (3) the current position and development in schools.

The School Effectiveness Framework is available on:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schooleffectivenessframework/?lang=en>

We intend to build on this successful conference and will be organising two regional events during 2008/2009.

