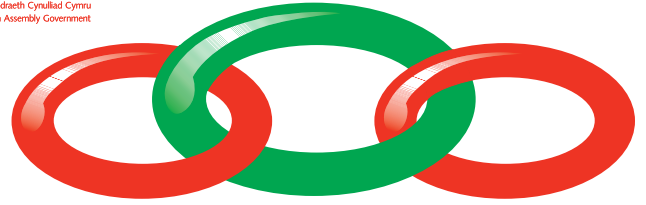


CADWYN



ALL WALES CENTRE *for* GOVERNOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH
and
GOVERNORS WALES

"LISTENING AND LEARNING... THE RIGHT STORY": NEW RESOURCE FROM THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER FOR WALES

A resource packed with messages from children and young people, aimed at all working within the education sector, has recently been published by Wales' 'children's champion'. Sara Young, Media and PR Officer of the Children's Commissioner for Wales reports.

Staff of the Children's Commissioner for Wales over the last two years have been working with children and young people across the country looking at what would make a positive difference to them in their schools. It was a piece of work that children and young people wanted to see the Commissioner take forward on their behalf.

Work began on gathering the views of children and young people about what makes a good teacher and the things they liked doing in schools at the Urdd Eisteddfod in Conwy. Further exploratory work around the original set of key messages took place at the National Eisteddfod, followed by a series of workshops with groups from a variety of settings and backgrounds including secondary schools pupils, excluded, looked after and disabled children and young people.

About 700 children aged between seven and 23 shared their views with the Commissioner's team about their learning experience, what elements of school they enjoy and areas where things could improve to help make sure they reach their full potential.

From the hundreds of quotes and comments collated from children and young people, nine key messages emerged which form the basis of "Listening and Learning... the Right story". They include:

- A good teacher is fair
- We like learning in lots of ways
- A good teacher is approachable and supportive
- A good teacher makes the classroom a safe place to be.

Underpinning the Commissioner's work is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – a series of rights that all children and young people need to make sure that they are safe, have the things they need to survive and develop, and have a say in decisions that affect their lives. Within the resource, the Commissioner's team has sought to make direct correlations between the children's key messages and elements of the Convention.

As well as the UNCRC being a key cornerstone of the Commissioner's office, the Welsh Assembly Government in 2004 decided to adopt the Convention as the basis for all of their policy making for children and young people. The government's implementation of the UNCRC in a country is reviewed every five years by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. In October 2008, the Committee published its concluding observations (recommendations) for the UK and included was a specific recommendation for the State party to: "...strengthen children's participation in all matters of school, classroom and learning which affect them."

The resource has useful links to the Convention as well as other published guidance and policies about children's participation in their education, including information around the School Effectiveness Framework and the National Participation Standards for Children and Young People in Wales.

Commenting on his latest publication, Keith Towler, Children's Commissioner for Wales, said:

"Pupil participation in schools across Wales has developed considerably over the last seven years and has been recognised by Estyn as an essential part of all education. There is obviously a clear need to embed pupil participation within a school and to move beyond statutory requirements of school councils so that all children benefit from participation.





“I appreciate that every school and every child is different and the methods used to engage and involve will differ according to these and many factors. We have sought the views of teachers, headteachers and Union members before finalising the resource. We are now hopeful that the resource will enable these key partners and others working within the education sector to glean key messages from their pupils and that their views and opinions are used to directly inform the school’s practice.”

The Commissioner’s staff will be running various seminars over the coming months to introduce the resource. For further information about “Listening and Learning...the Right story” and to download a copy please visit the Commissioner’s website on: www.childcomwales.org.uk or email mymessages@childcomwales.org.uk

SCHOOL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS IN WALES

Have you ever wondered how exactly your school is funded? In this article, Dr. David Lloyd-Thomas of the Welsh Assembly’s School Management and Effectiveness Division explains how your school budget is worked out and also looks at the part governors play in setting and monitoring the way the school uses its budget allocation.

School governors have wide ranging responsibilities and foremost amongst them is management of the school budget. Every governor should be interested in the school budget because it underpins the operation of the school such as paying for staff, paying to improve facilities, purchasing equipment, etc. All of these are crucial for the school to be able to offer high quality education so a well managed budget is the basis for an effective, high performing school.

How Schools are Funded

It’s a common misconception that the Welsh Assembly Government funds schools. In fact almost all of a school’s funding comes from local authorities. The Welsh Assembly Government does not fund schools directly, except for grants that are earmarked for specific education purposes, such as the foundation phase, funding for sixth forms and some capital building. Instead the Welsh Assembly Government pays local authorities a block grant called the Revenue Support Grant which, with income from other sources such as Council Tax and business rates, funds a wide range of local services.

Before the start of the financial year local authority councillors set a council budget which includes an education budget. In turn, the education budget is broken down into three parts: the LEA Budget (which pays to run the LEA and to provide central functions such as school improvement), a Schools’ Budget (which pays for services provided directly to all schools, such as school meals for example), and an Individual Schools Budget, which is then allocated by a formula to every school in the authority and is delegated to governors to manage.

Local authorities decide the formula to allocate school budgets, but every formula has to follow principles established by the School Budget Shares (Wales) Regulations 2004. This means that the formula has to take account of the number of pupils at a school and it may also take account of a wide range of factors that have cost

implications such as social deprivation, special education needs and providing education through the medium of Welsh.

An authority must also consult with its local Schools Forum when setting the authority’s Schools’ Budget and when setting or adjusting the formula. The Education (Wales) Schools Forum Regulations 2003 require all local authorities in Wales to establish a Schools Forum. The Forum is a sounding board of school and governor representatives who give the authority a stakeholder perspective about budgetary matters.

Taken together, this way of allocating and managing money means that budget management and decision making power is given to people who are closest to the ground and so are best placed to judge local needs and circumstances.

The Governors’ Role in Managing the School Budget

When the school receives its budget the governors and head teacher should plan how to use it. This is a prelude to the governing body formally agreeing the budget for the financial year, which it must do during the summer term.

Budget management means taking decisions that affect the whole school. Sometimes the choices will be hard but governors are not alone because local authorities will provide support, advice and training. Of course, if it does go badly wrong a local authority may suspend a school’s right to a delegated budget. This is very much a last resort however.

Managing the budget well is more than just balancing the books. It means planning for long term goals as well. So when agreeing the budget, and evaluating progress throughout the year, governors should take account of the financial needs of the school development plan, maintenance and improvement of the school buildings, and information about how the school’s pupil numbers might change and impact on future budget allocations. Schools may accumulate savings and keep them; but



similarly if the budget goes into the red that debt will bite into the school's next budget. Governors should only allow a deficit budget if there are good reasons for it and they have a plan to return to surplus. A small surplus for unforeseen contingencies is sensible but governing bodies should neither hoard money nor spend recklessly.

During the year the governing body should monitor the budget to be confident that it is being used properly and that it will balance at the end of the year. The budget should be an agenda item on each term's full governing body meeting. Governors are responsible for ensuring that there are accurate accounts and budget monitoring underpins that.

Day to day budget management is detailed work and so many governing bodies have a finance committee which monitors the budget in detail and works closely with the head teacher. This has the advantage of freeing up the whole governing body from budget management detail. It also enables some governors to specialise.

Of course it would not be practical for governors to take all decisions on spending. Below a threshold level decided by the governing body, small spending decisions

are best delegated to the head teacher or another designated member of staff. Some schools have taken this further and employ a bursar or finance manager who manages the budget on a day to day basis. The advantage of employing a bursar is that a school has someone with financial expertise managing the budget. It also frees up the head teacher and leadership team. There is growing interest in the benefits of schools employing bursars. Accordingly, the Welsh Assembly Government has commissioned Estyn to review the roles and responsibilities of bursars, to assess their effectiveness and potential benefit to schools, and to identify and describe best practice that other schools might adopt. The review will be completed in 2010 and the Welsh Assembly Government hopes to publish guidance for schools on this matter afterwards.

This article has only given you an overview of how schools are allocated budgets and your responsibilities as a governor. You can find out more on the Welsh Assembly Government website at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/schools/lang=en>

REMINDER TO CHAIRS

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide copies of "Cadwyn" for every governor in Wales, so when you have finished with your copy, please pass it on to other members of your governing body. Alternatively, "Cadwyn" is available online on the All Wales Centre for Governor Training and Research's section of the Governors Wales web-site. www.governorswales.org.uk

FROM THE CENTRE MANAGER

Although much of the work we do at the Centre involves undertaking research, usually on behalf of the National Assembly, this term I seem to have spent much more time than usual on training. Some of this has been taken up with producing a national training programme on understanding data, but I've also been travelling around Wales running training sessions for governors. "The effective governing body" and "The problems of being a governor" remain very popular, but an increased interest has been shown in the training I provide on dealing with data and also handling complaints. I'm particularly pleased that governors want to get to grips with understanding data and using it to help raise standards in their schools, but I hope the increasing popularity with the second course, "handling complaints", is the result of

a desire to prepare for what might happen rather than a response to what is already happening.

I also ran a training session for the first time on the role of the local authority governor in Conwy in October. I think we all came to the conclusion that although the different types of governors may have a slightly different view of their school, all work for the same thing – raising standards for their pupils. You can imagine, then, how pleased I was that this view was supported totally by Merrill Nicholls who is a local authority governor at two schools in Flintshire and whom I interviewed for our "Conversations" feature.

Steve Gullick

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CONVERSATIONS

Merrill Nicholls is a local authority governor at two schools in Flintshire. In “Conversations” she talks to editor, Steve Gullick, about how she carries out her role.

S.G. Well, Merrill, how long have you been an LEA Governor?

M.N. I have been an LEA governor for 10 years at a large community primary school (620 pupils) and for two years at a smaller community primary school (120pupils).

S.G. Why did you become an LEA governor in two schools?

M.N. I had been a parent governor for 12 years in the school and my term of office was coming to an end. The school approached me to ask would I be willing to continue as they were keen to keep me as an experienced governor. I was happy to continue as I enjoyed being involved with the school that I had attended as a child, and that my sons had attended and I felt I was giving something back to the school and the local community.

As for the smaller school, well this school was having to form an entirely new governing body and at a governor training session one day I was asked by the LEA Governance Manager would I be interested in joining this new body. I had met the Headteacher some years earlier whilst on training and felt she would be a person I could work with so I was happy to take on the role.

S.G. What would you say are the particular challenges or difficulties facing a local authority governor as opposed to, say, a parent or teacher governor?

M.N. I wouldn't say that the challenges of an LEA governor are different from any other type. After all, all governors have equal status, power and right to vote and face challenges and difficulties on behalf of the school, as one body. Having said that, the different categories of governor may have different perspectives and it's this variety of views which I think, makes a governing body effective. As an LEA governor I feel I represent the wider community and can perhaps put forward a broader view than other categories of governor and I see this as an advantage not a challenge. I would expect other categories of governor to put forward their particular interests and ideas but we all respect each others point of view and it makes for interesting discussions and informed decisions. The strength of a governing body is built on the talent of individual members and their ability to work as a team.

S.G. How do you go about meeting those challenges?

M.N. Being a LEA governor is an interesting opportunity not a challenge and I'm also a Chair of Governors at one of the schools which I believe is a privilege. As for carrying out my role in both schools, I certainly have to be organized. First of all, I arrange my commitments to make sure I attend all the governor meetings and find this gives me a good overview of how our strategic plans are being carried out. I visit both schools on a regular basis and feel I can be part of their successes and opportunities for improvements. As Chair of the larger school I sometimes have a working lunch with the senior management team where we're able to discuss management issues. I attend LEA training events and the governors forum meetings to ensure I am up to date. Through my work I meet with LEA officers and Councillors and gain an insight into of their objectives for education in the county. This enables me to make informed decisions on the strategic direction of the school.

S.G. You obviously enjoy your role, Merrill, so what advice would you give to someone who is thinking of becoming or has just been appointed an LEA governor.

M.N. Congratulations to you and enjoy the experience! It will take time to become familiar with the proceedings but always take the opportunity to offer your opinion but when decisions are made remember you are part of a team, so be loyal to the governing body even if you might not agree entirely with what has been decided. Some issues will be confidential and it is essential to keep them as such, even if some people try to persuade you to tell them! Get to know your school, its staff, the pupils and the other governors, and, equally, let them get to know you.

Governors are one of the largest volunteer forces in the country and we play an important role in raising school standards so ensure you have the time to make the commitment. You will need to attend meetings and be well informed in preparation for those meetings – time for reading the paperwork is needed.

Take advantage of all the governor training. Ask if there is an induction course for new governors – this is always useful for bringing a new governor up to speed.

Finally, remember once appointed a governor's priority is to contribute to raising standards at a school. You cannot be mandated by the local authority to take a particular line so you should always give your opinion in the best interests of the school



WORDS FROM THE NEW CHAIR OF GOVERNORS WALES



I was delighted to become Chair of Governors Wales this July and to have the opportunity to work closely with our Director, Jane Morris, other members of staff and all members of the management committee. We are all committed to providing independent advice, guidance and support on any issue of governance and to be the voice of governors in

Wales. It is an exciting time to be in this role when there are many exciting developments and challenges for both the organisation and school governance.

I am able to bring to the role both my career and school governance experience. My working life has been in both social work and education at practice and management level. Most recently, prior to retirement last year, I worked in a Family Learning and Basic Skills Team of Lifelong Learning, spending most of my time in various primary and secondary schools. Since retirement I have continued going into schools, in another role, as a speaker on Fairtrade and I am also an assessor for schools applying for the Fairtrade Schools Status.

Since 1996 I have been active in school governance. I am a secondary school governor at Bishop Gore School in Swansea where I am SEN Governor as well as currently sitting on personnel, curriculum and pupil support committees. For eight years I was on a primary school governing body where I was Chair for three consecutive years.

For the last ten years I have represented Swansea on Governors Wales Management Committee. During that time I have been Treasurer for three and sit on finance, public relations, constitutional and consultative sub committees and working groups. Recently I have represented Governors Wales on the Welsh Assembly Governments 8 – 14 Task and Finish Group.

At Governors Wales we are proud of our Helpline on 0845 60 20 100, our Website www.governorswales.org.uk, our handbook, Fact Files, publications and conferences all of which go towards providing the support needed for effective and efficient school governance. It is important though that we continue to improve our communication so that all governing bodies and individual governors in Wales are aware of the organisation and our role. With that in mind, I look forward to the opportunity of meeting as many of you as possible during my term in office.

AGM AND SUMMER CONFERENCE 2009

Governors Wales' Annual Summer Conference was held at the Powys County Hall in Llandrindod Wells on Saturday 11th July 2009.

The theme of the day focused on The Independent Safeguarding Authority and Safeguarding Children in Education.

A presentation was given by Tom Davies, Welsh Member of the UK Independent Safeguarding Authority Board and Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills delivered the keynote speech.

Evaluations of the conference were overwhelmingly "good" or "excellent".

A detailed report plus links to the ISA website and key documents on safeguarding are available on the Governors Wales website: www.governorswales.org.uk

At the AGM held in July, the following Officers were elected:

Chair	-	Carol Sayce (Swansea)
Vice-Chair	-	Hugh Patrick MBE (Powys)
Treasurer	-	Alan Tait (Torfaen)
Secretary	-	Doug Snook (Neath Port Talbot)

GOVERNOR OF THE YEAR

Many congratulations to Mr Dan Roberts, Chair of governors at Ysgol Gyfun Plasmawr, Cardiff who won the award for "Governor of the Year in Wales". Further information about the Teaching Awards can be found on www.teachingawards.com

NEWS FROM GOVERNORS WALES

OPENING OF THE GOVERNORS WALES' OFFICE

Governors Wales moved offices on 14th May 2009. Our new contact details are:

Ground Floor, 3 Oaktree Court, Mulberry Drive, Cardiff Gate Business Park, Cardiff, CF23 8RS. Telephone: 029 20731546. Fax: 029 20732448

Governors Wales hosted an event on Wednesday 21st October where Jane Hutt, Minister for Children,

Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills officially opened the Governors Wales' office.

Two new fact files were also launched at the event:

- **Community and Additional Community Governors**
- **Foundation Governors**

Both are available on <http://www.governorswales.org.uk/publications/fact-files/>



NORTH WALES REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Governors Wales held their regional conference in North Wales on Thursday 5th November 2009. The theme of the conference was The Effective Governing Body.

A report on the conference is available on <http://www.governorswales.org.uk/publications/conference-reports/>

GOVERNORS WALES' QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire will be sent out to a sample of governing bodies across Wales to find out views and thoughts on school governance in general and the services Governors Wales offers. The responses will assist in determining the strategic direction of Governors Wales for the next few years.

The questionnaire is also available on the website for any governors who wish to contribute to this research.

GOVERNORS WALES' WEBSITE

The Governors Wales' website www.governorswales.org.uk provides up to date, relevant information for school governors. Recent developments include case studies.

We are in the process of evaluating the Governors Wales' website since its re-design in August 2007. We would be grateful if you could spare a moment to complete a short questionnaire which is available on the website in the "News" and "Governors Wales Publications" sections. Please email your response to smacnamara@governorswales.org.uk or fax on 029 2073 2448

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS - REPORT FROM THE ENTERPRISE AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Governors Wales was asked to submit written and give oral evidence to the Enterprise and Learning Committee concerning the role of school governors arising from their enquiry into the teacher workload agreement.

The report from the Committee can be found at: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-guide-docs-pub/bus-business-documents/bus-business-documents-doc-laid.htm?act=dis&id=136907&ds=7/2009>

RARELY COVER

Information about 'Rarely cover' which came into effect from 1st September 2009 can be found in guidance produced by the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group called 'Rarely cover Implementation Process Guidance' available on:

Versions in English: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/schools/raisingstandardstacklingworkload/workforceagreement/rarelycover/?lang=en>

Versions in Welsh: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/schools/raisingstandardstacklingworkload/workforceagreement/rarelycover/?skip=1&lang=cy>

Further information is also set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2009 available on: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=14150>

FUTURE PUBLICATIONS & EVENTS

In this issue of Cadwyn you will find the latest "Fact File" from Governors Wales on "Foundation Governors". If you require additional copies please telephone the Governors Wales office on 0845 60 20 100.

Future publications to look out for include:

- Fact File on Community Governors and Additional Community Governors
- Helpline News September 2008 – August 2009
- Updates for the School Governors Handbook which will be sent electronically to schools in due course:
 - o Jargon Buster
 - o A revised curriculum for Wales

SOUTH WALES REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Governors Wales will be holding two regional conferences in South Wales in 2010. The theme of both conferences will be The Effective Governing Body. ESIS area – 6th March 2010. Greater Gwent - 14th May 2010

The conference aims to give school governors time to reflect on their role in leading school improvement. There will also be opportunities to network with other governors from across North Wales to share knowledge and experience of effective school governance.

Further details will be available on www.governorswales.org.uk or from your local authority governor support office.

Llywodraethwyr Cymru Governors Wales
GOVERNORS HELPLINE

0845 6020100 is the helpline for governors of schools in Wales.

Operated by Governors Wales the helpline will provide advice on a range of issues to governors in all parts of Wales.



FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

FACT FILE 04/09

INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of Foundation Governors on the governing bodies of both Aided and Controlled schools is one of the distinguishing characteristics of a faith school. The Foundation Governors represent the historic link with the original establishment of the school and its distinctive religious ethos.

They are also represented on the governing bodies of foundation schools which were set up under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to replace the grant-maintained option, where central government had previously provided the school with direct funding. At Foundation Schools, as at Voluntary Aided but not Voluntary Controlled Schools, the governing body employs the school's staff and has primary responsibility for admission arrangements. The school's land and buildings are owned by the governing body or by a charitable foundation.

In most ways Foundation Governors are the same as other governors. All governors are entrusted with the responsibility for establishing a strategic framework for the school by setting aims and objectives for the school, policies and targets for achieving the aims and objectives and to regularly review the progress made. Their duties cover monitoring the curriculum, finance, personnel and premises to ensure that the school functions efficiently. A minority are in place *ex-officio* (by right of office). These are usually the local incumbent i.e. local vicar or priest and, occasionally, representatives of trusts or other bodies.

KEY FACTS

- Foundation governors are members of the governing bodies of voluntary aided, foundation and voluntary controlled schools. They are appointed to ensure that the particular religious character of the school is preserved and developed (if it has a religious character) and to secure compliance with the trust deed, if there is one.
- ARE appointed for a term of office up to a maximum of 4 years. The person/persons that are to appoint foundation governors must be named in the School's Instrument of Government, together with the number of foundation governors that are to be appointed. In **voluntary aided schools**, the number of foundation governors must outnumber the other governors by at least two*. The foundation governors must also include at least two governors who, when appointed, are parents of pupils at the school.
**Please refer to regulation 19 in The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005*
- Where the Instrument of Government provides for a foundation governor to act *ex-officio*, provision should be made for a substitute foundation governor to act in the place of an *ex-officio* foundation governor, if:
 - (i) the *ex-officio* foundation governor is unable or unwilling to act as a governor or has been removed as a governor; or
 - (ii) where there is vacancy in the post of *ex-officio* governor.

Foundation Governors:

- ARE entitled to exercise the same powers, duties and responsibilities as other governors and have the same rights as other governors. However, foundation governors have some additional legal responsibilities to ensure that:
 1. the particular religious character of the school is preserved and developed;
 2. the school is conducted in accordance with its trust deed;
 3. the religious education curriculum is in accordance with diocesan policy and;
 4. collective worship is in accordance with the tenets and practices of the particular religion;
 5. where a school has foundation governors, the foundation governors must approve the draft Instrument of Government before the governing body can submit it to the Trustees/Diocesan Authorities and in turn the LEA, in order for it to be amended or changed.
 6. Foundation governors of voluntary controlled schools may determine the use to which the premises are put on Sundays.
- ARE required, like other governors to exercise their own best judgement when contributing to the decisions of the governing body.
- ARE eligible to be disqualified from completing their term of office if they fail to attend governing body meetings for more than six months, without the consent of the governing body.
- CAN be removed by the person who appointed him or her. An *ex-officio* foundation governor may be removed by the person named in the Instrument of Government who is entitled to remove him or her. Written notice must be given to the governing body clerk and to the governor in question.
- CAN be suspended by the governing body by resolution, for all or any meetings of the governing body for up to 6 months for reasons as noted in **The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005 (Regulation 49)**

Foundation governors:

- MAY NOT act individually unless a specific task has been formally allocated to them by the governing body, giving power to the individual governor to act on its behalf.
- MAY NOT, in common with all other categories of governor, play a part in the governing body's decision making when they have a personal and /or pecuniary interest in the outcome of the decision.
- MAY NOT, in common with all other categories of governor, disclose details which are unlikely to be recorded in the minutes, even if the details have not been deemed to be confidential by the governing body.

Remember like all governors, Foundation governors can benefit from training. In addition advice and information can always be sought from the LEA governor support office, the diocesan authority and from the Governors Wales' helpline 0845 6020100.

Essential reference material:

School Governors Guide to the Law; A Handbook for School Governors in Wales; Principles of Conduct for Governors of Schools in Wales; The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005

N.B. This fact file should be read in conjunction with the material listed above and the information produced by your LEA and diocesan authority where appropriate.