



CADWYN



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

INTRODUCING THE ALL WALES CORE DATA SET

Data and statistics are vital in helping schools understand how well they are performing and, more importantly, what they need to do to improve even more. In this article, Lindsay Lewis, of the School Improvement Branch at the Welsh Assembly Government, looks at how governors can use the All Wales Core Data Set to help continue to raise standards in their schools.

The School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) is the overarching policy for school improvement and effectiveness across all schools in Wales. It aims to:

- Improve overall pupil achievement
- Reduce variation in achievement within and between different groups of pupils, schools and localities
- Reduce the link between socio-economic circumstances and pupil/school attainment
- Bring together all work aimed at improving learning and wellbeing for school-aged children and young people in a common purpose that is mutually supportive

Core themes that underpin the SEF are strong self evaluation, the use of data and management information to identify strengths and weaknesses and the need to work collaboratively and learn from one another.

To support these core themes we have developed a national core data set for primary and secondary schools. Individual data packs were released to schools over the autumn term to support self evaluation and target setting timetables. The packs included analyses of end of key stage 1, 2 and 3 teacher assessments, attendance, key stage 4 external examinations and Value Added (for secondary schools). The pack contents are largely pictorial with trends provided where possible.

Statistical Families

To address the difficulty that many schools had in being able to consider their performance against that of other similar schools and share good practice, the 'All Wales Core Data Set' contains comparative performance data for 'families' of schools facing broadly similar challenges across Wales.

Schools have been grouped into families of around 10 schools according to the level of challenge they face. A three-stage process of grouping according to the main

language through which the school teaches (English / Welsh / bilingual), size (primary schools only) and a contextual profile of the school population was used. The contextual profile takes account of the socio economic environment in which the schools operates, using the proportion of pupils eligible for Free Schools Meals (FSM), the proportion who live in very deprived areas according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, the proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Family member number 1 in a grouping is the 'most challenged' according to the criteria we have used; family member number 10 is the 'least challenged'.

How to use your Data Pack

One of a governing body's responsibilities is to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness. Effective self evaluation requires 3 main questions to be posed:

1. How well are we doing?
2. What needs to be improved?
3. What must we do to improve?

The data pack can help you address these questions in the following ways:

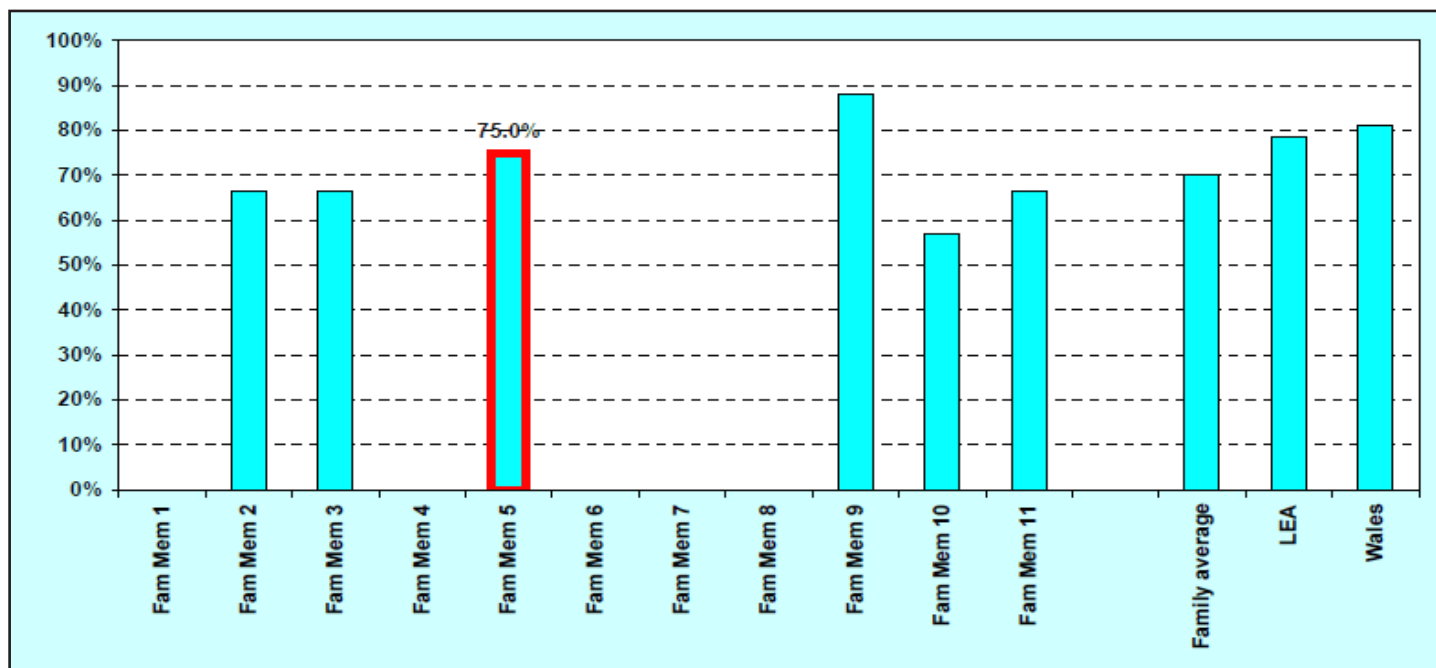
- Performance graphs show current results and trends over three years, along with a range of comparisons. This allows you to consider your school's results against local and national performance as well as against the outcomes for schools in your 'family'.
- Comparing your results with similar schools may indicate strengths and areas for development. Focus on trends and relative differences in performance in order to determine strengths and areas of concern.
- Investigating the learning and teaching approaches used within high performing but contextually similar schools in your family may reveal strategies that would help your school to improve.



Your data pack is a key resource for evaluating your school's performance. However, it is only the starting point – the next stage is to build up the 'story' behind the data.

eligible for assessment in that language, for example where a family group has some schools assessing for first language Welsh and others who do not; or the school does not have a Key Stage 1 or 2.

Chart 1m: Family comparison - percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in the Core Subject Indicator



(N.B. the school to which this data has been sent is family member 6 and its bar has been outlined in red.)

Discussions with the Headteacher, focussed on the questions that arise from looking at the data and from getting to know your family schools, will build up the story. They will help identify issues and priorities, and also help you identify your strengths and successes. Data alone is unlikely to provide solutions to identified issues. Instead, it raises questions.

Health warnings

Take care when interpreting data. Some areas to be aware of are:

Primary schools - Small numbers in a cohort mean that each pupil has a bigger effect overall on the cohort. In addition, there may be no boys, girls or even pupils for some cohorts. The combination of these factors can distort outcomes and school trends. Consequently, it may not be possible to draw clear conclusions from analysis based on very small groups of pupils alone.

Missing Data - Some data may appear to be missing for some schools for a variety of reasons e.g. no pupils

Some schools may have fewer family members, for example where a family has a mix of infant and primary schools; the infant schools will not show in the key stage 2 graphs as they only have key stage 1 results. In these cases, the family graphs may appear incomplete, see Chart 1m.

Guidance, Training and Skills

The packs are supported by detailed guidance materials and we are working with Local Authorities and Estyn to help develop training materials that can be used to improve skills in the use of data and statistics.

Contact us

If you have any queries, ideas or examples of good practice we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact School Information and Improvement at the Welsh Assembly Government at IMS@wales.gsi.gov.uk

All Wales Centre for Governor Training and Research

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REGULATIONS REGARDING THE APPOINTMENT OF HEADS AND DEPUTIES

Important changes were made on 1 January to the Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2006. In some circumstances a governing body no longer has to advertise headteacher and deputy headteacher vacancies. From now on when a headteacher vacancy arises as a result of statutory proposals to re-organise and amalgamate two or more schools, the governing body may choose not to advertise if there is already a head or heads in the schools being re-organised who is interested in becoming head of the new school. If the governing body is satisfied that this person or persons is suitable, they may proceed to interview without advertisement. The same applies to deputy headteachers.

These changes were made by The Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) (Amendment No.2) Regulations 2009, following consultation. The Welsh Assembly Government's intention is to make easier, and to shorten, the head and deputy head appointment procedure in school re-organisations. Naturally, in weighing up whether to advertise vacant positions, the governing body needs to satisfy itself that persons expressing an interest are good enough. If they are not the governing body should advertise nationally to attract a stronger field of candidates.

The Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales)(Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2009 are available at OPSI:
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/wales/wsi2009/wsi_20093161_en_1

GOVERNORS' GUIDE TO THE LAW

In order to be effective it is important that school governors refer to this guidance document as it will help them understand their roles and legal responsibilities and how these fit in with the responsibilities of the headteacher, the Local Authority and the Welsh Assembly Government, and other parties such as Diocesan Authorities and foundation where applicable.

The electronic version of the guide is available on the Welsh Assembly Governments website and can be found at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/schools/?skip=1&lang=cy>

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/schools/?lang=en> under the heading School Governors.

It is anticipated that the guide will be distributed hard copy to Local Authorities by the end of February. CD's will follow shortly after.

It is also important that school governors check the Welsh Assembly Government's website for any policy changes or amendments to the Chapters. It is envisaged this will be done regularly. Our team will e-mail Governor Support Officers advising them at that time what chapters have been amended.

FROM THE CENTRE MANAGER

During last Summer and Autumn terms I did research for Welsh local authorities on training for governors, and as part of this I looked at governor vacancies in Wales. It seems that in practically every authority the greatest shortage is among community governors. Neither I nor the local authority governor support officers were really surprised by the findings, and I'd be willing to bet that if your governing body has a difficulty in filling all its places, community governors are probably the hardest to find. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised. After all, teacher governors, staff governors and parent governors all have a direct connection with the school, which is not the case with most community governors. I have always felt that this greater distance from the school which most

community governors have is a real benefit as it gives a different perspective on a school which other governors, with the possible exception of local authority governors, cannot give. I was really glad then, when the two community governors I interviewed for "Conversations", Eirwen and Raymund Thomas, concurred with my view. Community governors provide a different slant on the school, but that slant is invaluable. I was also impressed by Eirwen and Raymund's commitment – 30 years in post and still enthusiastic – and also their understanding of a governor's role much of which they put down to good training as well as experience.

Steve Gullick



CONVERSATIONS

Husband and wife Raymund and Eirwen Thomas are both community governors in Carmarthenshire. Eirwen is also the Chair at the primary school where she is a community governor and also Chair at a second primary school where she is a local authority governor, while Raymund is the Chair at the secondary school where he serves.

S.G. How long have you both been governors?

E.T. I've been a governor for just over 30 years, all in the primary sector.

R.T. And I've been a secondary governor for about the same time.

S.G. So you've both got a lot of experience of governance.

E.T. Yes, I suppose we have. We've certainly had quite a lot to do with appointing staff. I've been involved in six Headship appointments and Raymund with three.

S.G. Why did you become governors in the first place?

E.T. It all started for me when our children were at school. I was on their school's P.T.A. and it seemed a logical step to become a governor. Then when the children moved on to secondary school I was asked to stay on as a community governor, or as it was then called, a co-opted governor. I didn't take much persuading as I have always been a community minded person and wanted to help the school and the local community.

R.T. I came into governing by a very different route. My background is in engineering and in the early 1980s I helped set up the Neighbourhood Engineering Scheme which aimed to promote engineering as a career. We used to organize whole day engineering projects for schools, and by taking part in these, I became interested in what schools did, which led me to become a governor.

S.G. Speaking as community governors what differences, if any, do you think exist between your role and that of say a teacher or staff governor?

R.T. Well first of all, I think that all governors have the same role in helping the school raise standards, but there are differences in our roles.

E.T. I agree, and I think that the biggest difference is that community governors are more distant from the school than teacher, staff and perhaps even local authority governors. We do not work at the school and therefore we provide a different perspective by looking at things from the outside rather than having an insider's view like a teacher governor or staff governor. We can also give an opinion on what we feel the community

may think about the school and what it's doing. These two viewpoints provided by community governors complement the more detailed view of other governors, so everyone has a fuller picture of what the school is about.

S.G. After 30 years as governors you've both had plenty of time to consider the answer to my next question: what do you like most and dislike most about being a governor?

E.T. The best thing is undoubtedly contact with pupils and staff and helping to make a contribution. After 30 years, I'm still enthusiastic about schools and education.

R.T. The same as Eirwen, and, in addition, being involved with a successful organization. I also enjoy networking with governors from other schools (the "greater governing community") at training sessions and Chair's forum meetings because I can pick up ideas from other governors which might help my school – it's also enjoyable just having a chat!

As for what I dislike most, well I think I can speak for both of us. First of all being a governor is not like being a member of the P.T.A. As a governor you accept there are things you are going to have to do which are not pleasant like making difficult financial choices or excluding pupils from school. What I dislike though, is the growth of the "blame culture" in which we now live. It seems that no matter what goes wrong and no matter what the reason, it's usually believed that someone is to blame and must pay for it even if it was a genuine accident or they made an unintentional mistake. Dealing with such incidents can take a lot of time and cause a lot of unnecessary stress. Obviously I'm not saying that people should act irresponsibly or without paying attention to such things as health and safety issues; that would be stupid, but I am concerned that too much fear of an accident happening or making a mistake can inhibit people from trying something new or different in case it goes wrong.

S.G. What then, do you see as the biggest challenge facing governors?

E.T. & R.T. Finance.

E.T. Many of the new initiatives like the Foundation Phase and 14-19 Pathways are really exciting and I'm sure will benefit our children, but they need financial backing to ensure they succeed, and in the present economic situation, well



S.G. And finally, what advice would you give to someone who has just become a community governor?

E.T. First of all, attend training sessions so that you understand the importance of your role and what you have to do.

R.T. And I would add, network with governors from other schools – you'll pick up so many good ideas. Also, retain your enthusiasm and make sure you understand your commitments.

E.T. And fulfil them.

GOVERNORS WALES' HELPLINE SERVICE



Governors Wales' confidential, bi-lingual helpline provides independent advice and support on any issue concerning school governance in Wales, ranging from legal responsibilities, disciplinary and complaints procedures, health and safety, meetings and committee procedures and many more. Since the commencement of the helpline, calls have increased steadily on an annual basis.

Many of the callers are very grateful to have a confidential helpline where they can express their concerns or have their fears allayed and where they can be pointed in the right direction to obtain the necessary information.

We're here to support all governors, from newly appointed governors to governors with many years experience. Call us in confidence on 0845 60 20 100 (at local rate) (9.00a.m. – 10.00p.m. weekdays and 11.00a.m. – 4.00p.m. during weekends).

The helpline is operated by an expert team of helpline staff and governor volunteers who are supported, when necessary, by independent legal advisers retained on Governors Wales' behalf.

Feedback from callers has been complimentary.

Comments include:

"Very appreciative of your help and looking into to this for me"

"Wonderfully informative"

"What a splendid organisation! Tremendously helpful, very constructive advice!"

Governors Wales responded to numerous queries during the last academic year. Chairs were the most frequent users of the helpline service during this period. The most frequent issues on which guidance was sought related to:

- Complaints Procedures
- Procedures for Meetings/Minutes
- Election of Parent Governors
- Disciplinary procedures

For a full report of the helpline service and website for September 2008 – August 2009, please see "Helpline and Website News", which is available to download on the Governors Wales' website on www.governorswales.org.uk/publications/publications

Why not ring or e-mail us?

0845 60 20 100

helpline@governorswales.org.uk

GOVERNORS WALES' WEBSITE

The Governors Wales' website www.governorswales.org.uk provides up to date, relevant information for school governors. Please spare a few moments (or longer!) to browse the site – you will find news items, FAQs, a wealth of publications – ranging from Governors Wales publications, including Fact Files, Governors Guides etc. to circular guidance, statutory instruments and the new Guide

to the Law from the Welsh Assembly Government, direct links to LA governor training programmes and more!

We are keen to develop our website and would welcome any feedback, useful links, FAQs etc. A short questionnaire is also available to download on the website on www.governorswales.org.uk/publications/publications. Please feel free to complete and return it to us.

LOCAL GOVERNOR ASSOCIATIONS

Is your governing body affiliated to the local Governors' Association? If not, you may be missing a golden opportunity to learn more about, and help to shape, developments in the education sector.

Local Authority officers and Governors Wales are working hard to establish and support Governor Associations across the country to promote networking and sharing of good practice. Associations are also a valuable source of information for local and national government to seek

the views of school governors across a broad range of issues.

Every Local Association has a representative on the Management Committee of Governors Wales, where the 'local voice' can become the 'national voice'.

The more active your Association, the more influential it can be! For more information about your local Governors' Association go to the www.governorswales.org.uk/local or contact your LA governor support officer.



CONFERENCES

SOUTH WALES REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Governors Wales, in partnership with the four Local Authorities covering the ESIS consortium area (Bridgend, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff), arranged a conference on The Effective Governing Body for governors on Saturday 6th March 2010 at ESIS, Ty Dysgu, Nantgarw.

The conference report will be available to download on www.governorswales.org.uk/publications/conference-reports/

GREATER GWENT REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Governors Wales, in partnership with Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Local Education Authorities, will be holding a regional conference on Friday 14th May 2010 at the Christchurch Centre in Newport.

The theme of the conference is will look at the effectiveness of governing bodies and will aim to give school governors time to reflect on their strategic role in school improvement. There will also be opportunities to network with other governors from across South Wales to share knowledge and experience of effective school governance.

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

GOVERNORS WALES' AGM AND NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The theme of the conference will focus on Looking at the wider Initiatives for school governors including the School Effectiveness Framework, Collaboration and Partnership working and the Children and Young People's Plan. Further information is available from the Governors Wales office on 029 2073 1546 and www.governorswales.org.uk.

PUBLICATIONS

FACT FILES

In this issue of Cadwyn you will find the latest fact files from Governors Wales on "Community Governors" and "Additional Community Governors", copies of which can be downloaded from the Governors Wales' website.

HANDBOOK UPDATES

An update for the "Handbook for School Governors in Wales" has been sent out via email to all schools, chairs of governing bodies and clerks. The update on the Jargon Buster Section in Part 5 replaces pages 137 to 140. The update is also available to download on the Governors Wales website

<http://www.governorswales.org.uk/publications/2010/01/22/january-2010/>

The Curriculum section has also been revised and will be sent out electronically before the end of term.

Future handbook updates, available in due course, will include revised information on the New Inspection Framework

GOVERNORS WALES' QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire has been 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. Thanks to all those who responded.

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.

KEY FACTS: *All Maintained schools, except Voluntary-Aided schools, include community governors in their membership*

Community Governors:

- Usually live or work in the community served by the school and are committed to the good government and success of the school. Community governors bring their own experience or skills to the governing body and can act as a link with the community. They are appointed to represent community interests to enable the governing body to add specific areas of expertise to the governing body, reflecting a balance of interests amongst the stakeholder group.
- **ARE** appointed by the governing body to serve for a term of 4 years.
- **ARE** entitled to exercise the same powers, duties and responsibilities as other governors and have the same rights as other governors.
- **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 governing body following a set procedure.
- **CAN** be suspended by the governing body by resolution, for all or any meetings of the governing body for up to six months for reasons as noted in The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005 (Regulation 49).

Community Governors:

- **MAY NOT** hold office or be appointed as a Community governor if they are eligible to be a teacher or staff governor or are a registered pupil at the school.
- **MAY NOT** be appointed as a Community governor if they are an elected member of the LEA.
- **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, Community governors can benefit from training. Advice and information can always be sought from the LEA governor support office, the diocesan authority (where appropriate) 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.

Additional Community Governors:

- Enable the governing body to add specific areas of expertise to the governing body, reflecting a balance of interests amongst the stakeholder group. They are appointed as representatives of the community council and may present the community council's view in the same way as other categories of governors represent the interests of their constituents.
- **ARE** nominated by the community council (s) where a maintained primary or nursery school is situated in a community council area*. If a school serves an area where there are 2 or more community councils, the governing body may request nominations from one or more of the community councils.
- **ARE** appointed for a term of office up to a maximum of 4 years by the community council. This is determined by the person/body who appoints the additional community governor.
- **ARE** entitled to exercise the same powers, duties and responsibilities as other governors and have the same rights as other governors.
- **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 nominated him or her.
- **CAN** be suspended by the governing body by resolution, for all or any meetings of the governing body for up to six months for reasons as noted in The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005 (Regulation 49).

Additional Community 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.

*** Please note: If this is the case, the Instrument of Government of a school must provide for the governing body to include an additional community governor in addition to the other categories of governors.**

Remember like all governors, Additional Community Governors can benefit from training. Advice and information can always be sought from the LEA governor support office, the diocesan authority (where appropriate) 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.

***The governing body may wish to seek clarification on the interpretation of this process.
Please phone the Governors Wales helpline on 0845 60 20 100***