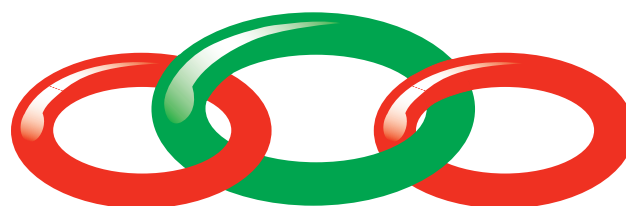


# CADWYN



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

## CONVERSATIONS

*Once again, "Conversations" has moved to the front page of "Cadwyn" and is longer than usual as our interview in this edition is with Chris Tweedale, Director of Schools and Young People at the Department for Education and Skills in the Welsh Government. He talks with editor, Steve Gullick, about his role and the challenges facing Welsh schools and their governing bodies.*

**S.G.** First of all, Chris, can you tell us a little about your background?

**C.T.** Well, in the first place I'm not a career civil servant. I started my working life as a secondary teacher in London in 1979. I then moved to Hertfordshire to become a Head of Department and then Head of Sixth Form. Incidentally, while I was in this position I was a teacher governor for two years. My next move was to Devon where I was Deputy Principal of a Community College and in 1996 I became a Headteacher in Herefordshire. After a number of years I moved, at first part time and then full time into the Department for Education and Skills as a Government adviser, working some of the time in the Cabinet Office with the Education Team. Finally, in 2009 I moved to my present job with the Welsh Government.

**S.G.** And what is your role as Director of Schools and Young People?



**C.T.** Put simply, I'm the official responsible for everything to do with school policy in Wales and also our Youth Service. But as with most roles, this can be broken down into a number of jobs.

First of all, I'm the Minister's chief policy adviser for schools and school standards, and as part of this job I manage about 300 civil servants who report to me.

Then I'm also in charge of all capital expenditure for 21st Century Schools and also the spending on I.T.

Finally, as you are probably aware, the Minister has recently set up the School Standards Unit and an important part of my role is working with this group, looking at standards and attainments across all schools and families of schools in Wales, and also, on a termly basis, consulting with local authorities about their schools' performance.

**S.G.** What do you see as the main challenges facing schools in Wales over the next two to three years?

**C.T.** Obviously, there are potentially quite a few, but I'd like to narrow it down to four.

I've been to schools and classrooms in Wales where the work being done is as good, if not better than, anything I've seen anywhere in the world. Unfortunately, we are not good at sharing this excellent practice between schools, and we MUST do this if we are to see real improvements in Wales. So, I would say our first aim is to help all schools learn from the best schools, so best practice becomes usual practice.

The second challenge is linked closely to the first. There is good practice in all schools in Wales but not, unfortunately, in all classes in the same schools. We have too much within-school variation so we have to make sure that best practice is shared within schools as well as between schools.

Dealing successfully with the third challenge is particularly important if we are to succeed. We must have high quality leadership at all levels across our school system. We need leaders who have the commitment to want nothing but the best for our young people and the skills to achieve that aim.

The final challenge is particularly difficult at this time of serious economic constraints but is as important as the other three if we are to see real improvements. We know that "money is tight" but we must ensure that all our schools are in good physical condition and have,



at least, adequate equipment – they have to be fit for purpose. So, perhaps more than ever, now that there is likely to be less cash available, we must ensure that there is the right investment in the right places and that money allocated for education in Wales gets to the classroom.

**S.G.** Obviously, at school level, Heads, teachers and support staff are key players in facing up to these challenges, especially the first three, but what part can governors play in dealing with them successfully?

**C.T.** Governors are integral to their schools, very much part of the team. Now if you are part of a team, you should not simply stand on the side cheering. As the Minister, Leighton Andrews, said, governors need to be more than cheer leaders. Of course they should support their school, but they should also carry out other roles and I would say the most important of these is to hold their Headteachers to account. They need to ask searching questions of their Heads to ensure that money is well spent and standards are high and, if they are not, what is being done about it.

Of course, this need not, in fact should not, be done in an aggressive or non-supportive way, but governors need to be assured that the very best is being

done for our children. They really have to be candid or questioning friends to fulfil their role in the team.

**S.G.** And in order to carry out this, and indeed, their other roles effectively, should some types of training, such as induction training for new governors and Chair training, be mandatory?

**C.T.** Oh, yes. High quality mandatory training is essential if governors are to carry out their roles well. I know governors are volunteers and I really appreciate the time they give to their schools, but governors need to have the necessary knowledge and skills if they are to carry out their roles effectively and this can only be achieved through receiving quality training. I think it's worthwhile comparing the position of a governor with that of a magistrate. Just like governors, magistrates are unpaid, but they cannot take up their position without training, and clearly, the job a magistrate does is so important that to undertake it without training would be unthinkable. But what governors do, helping in the education and development of all our young people, is equally, and some would say more, important. It follows, then, that training or, at least, certain types of training should be compulsory.

## THE CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND PRACTICE FOR TEACHERS

*The General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) was established in September 2000 and is the statutory self-regulating professional body for teachers in Wales. It protects pupils, parents and the public by ensuring that teachers are appropriately qualified and that they maintain high standards of conduct and practice. In this article, Deputy Chief Executive, Hayden Llewellyn, looks at the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for teachers and gives a number of examples of the code in action.*

When you think about it parents and guardians put their trust in teachers for 6 or 7 hours a day, 5 days a week. If you handed over your children to anybody else for this amount of time, it's fair to say you would want to know a bit about them. It is reassuring to know, therefore, that teaching, like medicine, nursing, legal services and social work is now a regulated profession. This means that all teachers must have an entry on the Register of Qualified Teachers, which confirms that they are appropriately qualified and their ongoing conduct and practice meets specified minimum standards.

GTCW published a revised **Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers** in September 2010. The Code sets out the key principles of good conduct and practice for registered teachers in Wales. It is intended to guide teachers' judgments and decisions and inform parents, pupils and the public of the

standards they can expect from registered teachers. In turn, the Code is also a valuable document for school governing bodies. Codes also exist for other regulated professionals like doctors, nurses, lawyers, opticians and social workers.

The Code is not a definitive or exhaustive guide, however failure to comply with it can potentially call a teacher's registration into question as the Council has legal powers to investigate and hear cases of alleged unacceptable professional conduct, serious professional incompetence and criminal offences involving a registered teacher.

### Key principles

The Code is based around based around 7 key principles, namely that registered teachers:

- base their relationship with pupils on trust and respect;



- have regard to the safety and wellbeing of pupils in their care;
- work in a collaborative manner with teachers and other professionals, and develop and maintain good working relationships with parents, guardians and carers;
- act with honesty and integrity;
- are sensitive to the need, where appropriate, for confidentiality;
- take responsibility for maintaining the quality of their professional practice;
- uphold professional trust and confidence in the teaching profession.

Within these key principles, the Code gives detailed guidance to registered teachers, parents, pupils and the public by setting out further statements as to the conduct and practice expected of registered teachers.

### The Code in action

To illustrate the use of the Code, a number of examples follow of cases typically investigated by GTCW disciplinary Committees with an indication of which sections within the Code have been potentially called into question.

#### Case 1

A registered teacher is dismissed by his school for inappropriate conversations with a pupil using Facebook, email and by text, in breach of a school policy.

Relevant key principle in the Code: "Registered teachers base their relationships with pupils on trust and respect".

Relevant references: "(a) Registered teachers follow policies, procedures and guidelines on matters such as communication with pupils, physical contact, behaviour management, inclusion, access and equality of opportunity (b) Registered teachers conduct their relationships with pupils professionally and appropriately both in and out of school (c) Registered teachers ensure that any communication with pupils is appropriate,

including communication via electronic media such as email, texting and social networking websites".

#### Case 2

A registered teacher resigns while under investigation by her school for falsifying her application for a teaching post at the post.

Relevant key principle in the Code: "Registered teachers act with honesty and integrity".

Relevant references: "Registered teachers represent themselves, their experience, professional position and qualifications honestly".

#### Case 3

A registered teacher commits a criminal offence involving the possession of cocaine outside of school.

Relevant key principle in the Code: "Registered teachers uphold trust and confidence in the teaching profession".

Relevant references: "Registered teachers:

- adhere to lawful behaviour, in a manner in keeping with their position as a member of the teaching profession;
- do not engage or incite others to participate in criminal activity;
- are mindful of their position as role models to pupils, acknowledging that criminal behaviour may damage trust and confidence in them personally and in the teaching profession as a whole".

### Care needed by governing bodies in using the Code

While the Code is a valuable aid for governing bodies, if you are thinking about making reference to it in dealing with a disciplinary matter, you are strongly advised to seek the professional advice of your Local Authority Legal and Human Resources Departments.

#### Want to know more?

The Code is available at [www.gtcw.org.uk](http://www.gtcw.org.uk) or on request from 029 2046 0099.

## NEW TRAINING MATERIALS ON PUPIL PARTICIPATION NOW AVAILABLE

New training materials for staff, governors and pupils to help them develop pupil voice in schools in effective and fun ways are now available.

Why not take a look?

Let us know how you have used the materials, and how they have helped to change things in your school!

To access the materials go to:

<http://www.pupilvoicewales.org.uk/grown-ups/resources/training-modules-for-senior-leaders-governors-and-staff/>



## APPETITE FOR LIFE ACTION PLAN

The reported rise in childhood obesity has long been a cause for concern because of its subsequent effect on lifelong health and well-being. Poor diet has been documented as one of the prime causes of obesity in children and the Welsh Government, in partnership with key stakeholders is taking steps to help address the issue.

Food provided at schools forms only part of children and young people's diets; that said, school provides an ideal environment to convey positive messages on healthy eating and to support them through appropriate behaviours.

The Welsh Government's *Appetite for Life Action Plan* published in February 2008 sets out the strategic direction and actions required to improve the nutritional standards of food and drink provided in schools in Wales, including recommended food and nutritional standards. Guidelines for introducing these new standards have

been developed and tested as part of a two year (2008-10) research project. The project concludes that 'the school canteen, rather than being expected to behave as an extension to the high street (offering as much free choice as possible), needs to be understood as an extension of the classroom. The lesson of how to eat well needs to be digested in school.'

In addition to the project work, a grant scheme has been in place since 2008 to help support local authorities in their work with schools to make the transition to these standards.

Information in the form of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) has been developed for School Governors to help you develop an understanding of *Appetite for Life* and the role you can play in supporting work in this area. The FAQs can be accessed at [www.physicalactivityandnutritionwales.org.uk/page.cfm?orgid=740&pid=29527](http://www.physicalactivityandnutritionwales.org.uk/page.cfm?orgid=740&pid=29527)

## FROM THE CENTRE MANAGER

In our Summer 2010 edition of "Cadwyn" (Issue 26) I looked at the Education Department's 1898 "Special Report on Educational Subjects" to see how much the challenges faced by school governors and local authorities have changed over the last 110 years. You might recall that the organizational problems for schools and local authorities in the late 19th century were depressingly familiar.

Well, it's now time to consider how the impact of examinations and testing on schools has changed in the last 100 years.

It has become commonplace to hear regular complaints from educationalists that preparation for assessments and exams nowadays dominates what is done in our schools as teachers are forced to "teach to the test". Consequently, the broader education which pupils received in the past has all but disappeared.

Hmm – maybe. The Times Educational Supplement Magazine of 10th December 2010 looked at this issue and came up with some interesting findings. In 1911, for instance, the Consultative Committee on Examinations in Secondary Schools claimed "Examinations as ends in themselves have occupied too much of the thoughts of parents and teachers". Then in 1926 the President

of the N.U.T. "declared that the compulsory system of examination would drive the joy out of schools and would sacrifice the spiritual basis of education". And in the same year, the Times Educational Supplement reported that a teacher had complained "that examinations had come to dominate his work and made him a 'mark-getter'". Sound familiar?

Let's look at another modern concern. In recent years, educationalists have become increasingly worried about the decline in the number of pupils studying a modern foreign language. Well, maybe the problem has been in existence for longer than we think. The very first issue of the Times Educational Supplement in 1910 carried an article entitled "Plea for the Study of German" which outlined the decline of interest in that language. And as for pupils of today making mistakes that those of the past would never have done, how's this from an 'A' level English paper of 1962 "The Friar preferred the company of bare maids".

Things don't really change much, do they?

P.S. I hope all your pupils do well in their examinations and assessments this Summer.

**Steve Gullick**



## AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CLERKS TO GOVERNING BODIES



### WINNER - NERYS WILLIAMS, YSGOL DYFFRYN OGWEN, GWYNEDD

Governors Wales has run, for the second time, in conjunction with the National Governors Association, an award to find the outstanding clerk to a governing body in Wales. The purpose of this is to recognise and reward the contribution that clerks make to the effectiveness of governing bodies, and, in so doing, to encourage clerks generally to develop their role.

The winner of this year's Outstanding Clerk to Governing Body Award 2011 was announced by the Minister for Education and Skills, Leighton Andrews AM, at Governors Wales' conference for governors and clerks "Making a Difference" held on 10th March 2011.

The runners-up were: Alison Lincoln, Ysgol Y Dderwen, Carmarthenshire  
Ann Jones, Ysgol Gyfun Pantycelyn, Carmarthenshire

Nerys Williams, commented "I'm very pleased to receive an award which acknowledges and raises the profile of the work of clerks to governing bodies nationally. The duties of governors have increased over the years and the role of the clerk is crucial in assisting and facilitating the work".

Alan Llwyd, Headteacher, who nominated Mrs Williams for the award said "As the school's headteacher I feel that the award acknowledges the good work of a respected person in the school, and especially as the clerk to the governing body. An effective clerk is essential in serving the governing body and it is an important role which has not perhaps been sufficiently acknowledged in the past. This award from Governors Wales is a means of rectifying this and I warmly welcome it".

Ann Jones, runner-up said "I was honoured and delighted to have been nominated and awarded runner up at the recent Clerk to the Governing Bodies Award for Wales 2011. The award highlights the hard work and contribution clerks make to the efficiency of the Governing Body."



Minister for Education Skills, Leighton Andrews AM,  
Nerys Williams (Clerk), Ieuan Wyn (Chair of Governors)

## GOVERNING BODY QUALITY MARK

Governors Wales has been working with several Local Authorities, members of the SEF team and representatives from Estyn to produce a Quality Mark for governing bodies, supported by the Welsh Government and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales.

The pilot of the Bronze Award is now in the process of being concluded, with several Local Authorities taking part. The assessments were carried out by LA governor support officers and moderated by Governors Wales.

The pilot Quality Mark Bronze Award checks that statutory duties of governing bodies have been carried out and some additional areas of good practice have been addressed.

The feedback on the process to date from those who have taken part in the pilot exercise has been positive to date, with governors valuing the discussion that the exercise prompted. It is felt that the Quality Mark will help governors to focus on the important elements of their work that drive school improvement and raise standards.

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.



## GOVERNOR GUIDE ON SELF-EVALUATION

The recently published governor guide on self-evaluation is intended to help governors to understand their role in monitoring and reviewing performance and their contribution to the process of self-evaluation.

Self-evaluation is an honest and rigorous appraisal of performance based on the analysis of accurate, up-to-date information and data from a range of appropriate sources that can be used to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

Hand in hand with this is the need for the governing body to evaluate its own effectiveness in determining and influencing the school's ethos, direction of travel and performance outcomes.

This publication can be downloaded from <http://www.governorswales.org.uk/publications/2011/03/31/governor-guide-self-evaluation/>

## FUTURE PUBLICATIONS

### Look out for Governor Guides on:

- Using Performance Data
- The Role of the Clerk
- Collaboration

### Fact Files – The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brings together and replaces the previous anti-discrimination laws. It presents the law in a clearer and more unified way making it easier for schools to understand what they must or must not do to avoid discrimination and maximise equality of opportunity for pupils, parents, staff and others.

Although the Act consolidates previous legislation - such as the Disability Discrimination, Race Relations, and Equal Pay Acts - it does introduce a number of important changes that schools will need to be aware of. To raise initial awareness of the changes and to help schools consider what steps they may need to take, Governors Wales will be working with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to provide a short series of fact files.

The fact files will present some key points and prompts, such as the requirement for schools to collect and publish equality information by April 2012. Schools need to start considering how they will involve and consult to prioritise objectives to improve outcomes for people protected under the Act.

One fact file will briefly cover key points for schools from the Act, such as:

- Who is protected by the Act
- Forms of discrimination
- Pre-employment questions about health and disability

A second fact file will cover key points on the public sector equality duty for schools in Wales and links to Accessibility Plans.

The fact files will direct schools to further information as it becomes available, but introductory guidance is currently available at the following links: EHRC - Introduction and at EHRC - FAQs on the equality duty

## FUTURE EVENTS

Check the Governors Wales website for information on <http://www.governorswales.org.uk/news/>

- South West Wales Regional Conference, Margam - Tuesday 18th October 2011  
Keynote Address by Deputy Minister for Skills, Jeff Cuthbert AM
- North Wales Regional Conference, Bangor - Thursday 17th November 2011  
Keynote Addresses: Minister for Education and Skills - Leighton Andrews AM  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, Estyn - Ann Keane