



Casllwchwr Primary School – Sharing Good Practice

Role of Governors and Involvement in School Improvement and Self Evaluation

Rationale:

When I took over as Headteacher at Casllwchwr in September 2009 one of the first things I wanted to do was completely audit the skills of our governing body to involve them far more in school improvement. The vision was to eventually have governors involved in teaching and learning throughout the school as well as sharing their many skills with pupils.

What we did:

- Married up our individual governing body members to each of Estyn's seven key questions (last inspection cycle).
- With full involvement of all governors and members of staff we put together a code of conduct so that all stakeholders were completely clear as to the purpose of a governor focused visit.
- Carried out a full audit of all governors skills so that they could actively be involved in the school's Skillshare Scheme.
- Governing Body used the local authorities self evaluation model to identify their needs as a group as well as individually.
- Married up the training priorities of governors with SDP priorities.

What happened:

- Every governor undertook a focused visit each term, linked to their key question and reported back to the governing body.
- Governors skill sets were discussed by staff and linked with class learning topics for the year, across the school.
- Governors entered the classrooms as facilitators of leaning in many capacities e.g. graphic design, business plans, gardening, sewing, music etc...

- One governor, Mr David Brayley met with the SMT and entered into an agreement to carry out a whole teaching and learning literacy project with the aim being to raise standards for boys in upper key stage two.

“Believing Is Achieving Literacy Project:”(Structure.)

Mr David Brayley is employed full time for Swansea Council as a Business Performance Consultant, but was willing to use some of his annual leave to come into school to inspire the Year 6 class about literacy through the medium of sport.

David lead a six month literacy project focusing on interviews with several leading Welsh sports stars – Clayton Blackmore, Enzo Macarinelli, Nicole Cooke, Robert Croft, Ieuan Evans and Ashley Williams that resulted in the school publishing a book at the end of the project.

[\(http://www.cantaloupedesign.com/believing/\)](http://www.cantaloupedesign.com/believing/)

Each star came into school to be interviewed by the Year 6 class, except Nicole Cooke who lives in Switzerland. Fortunately, we were able to communicate with her via e-mail. Mr Brayley inspired the pupils through powerpoint presentations, archive footage, websites and his own vast sporting knowledge. He provided the pupils with a template to gather information and facts, and from these factsheets which the pupils produced, they learnt about the four different types of questioning techniques and developed many literacy as well as key skills. Their oracy skills were substantially enhanced as well as their reading, research and writing skills. Each sports star not only talked of the high and low points of their careers but also gave very important messages about life itself. This was clearly evident by the fact that one of the pupils came up with the title of the book – “Believing is Achieving.”

The pupils also had to carry out fundraising activities and formed their own business called “Veg Heads,” whereby they grew and sold vegetables in the local community to fund the publishing costs. Therefore, they developed their entrepreneurial skills and business acumen. Finally, as they were three hundred pound short of their total, the finance sub committee which the pupils set up, came and asked the school for an interest free loan so that the project could run. We were more than happy to do that and the pupils paid the loan back through sales of the book. The book was, and is, available to buy online through the publishers (see link above), the school website, facebook, Swansea City/Ospreys club shop, the school and other outlets throughout Swansea. This part of the project also taught the pupils the importance of advertising.

The role of the governor can never be underestimated and I truly believe that by carrying out a skills audit of all members that each and every school can tap into expertise which you or the school never new existed. This expertise can without doubt enhance the provision you provide to the pupils, can give the governor a clear focused insight into all aspects of school life and



ultimately can lead to your governing body understanding your school and playing a leading role in the day to day life of the school.

Outcomes of Project:

- One thousand copies of Believing is Achieving were published.
- Two pupils appeared on the Jamie and Louise show on Radio Wales to publicise the book and the Evening Post ran a centre spread about the project -
(<http://classwork200910.casllwchwrprimary.bambooning.com/Y6SportStaInterviewProject.html>).
- **Boys outperformed girls by +21% at Level 4+ in English at Key Stage two. This was a 47% turnaround on the previous three years results**
- Raised the self-esteem of all pupils and contributed towards all aspects of their literacy learning.
- Every library in our area of Swansea and some in Neath Port Talbot are carrying a copy of the book.
- We held a professional book launch at the Civic Centre where some of the sports stars came along.
- Several schools in Carmarthenshire are now using our project as a template to carry out a similar literacy strategy in their schools, promoting it as sector leading practice.
- During inspection week the Y6 pupils interviewed Clayton Blackmore along with Mr Brayley and the class teacher. Mr Brayley led the session and ESTYN awarded the lesson a grade one.



Next Steps (This year):

- Focused governor visits have continued under the new three ESTYN key questions.
- Governor skillshare scheme has continued with skills being shared including sports coaching, interactive whiteboard skills, website design, local history tours and mayoral duties and responsibilities.

Sustainable Project to maintain and improve boys achievement levels:

- As a SMT we were determined to maintain the excellent work we were doing in relation to boys achievement at the end of key stage two. It was imperative that we invested in something which impacted upon all pupils in the school but which had a direct impact on pupils in upper key stage two.
- To this end we have created a "Media Pod" and equipped the area with i-pads, i-pod touches, apple macs, a green screen, video editing equipment, voice recorders, camcorders, a dvd player and apple tv. This equipment sits alongside our existing library and has become our Media Pod.
(<http://www.casllwchwrprimary.org.uk/OurMediaPod.html>)

- Future plans are to also include audio books, DVD's and other media.
- The aim is to engage and motivate all pupils, especially boys in literacy and give them ownership over which way they would like to demonstrate their learning through a range of media opportunities which they are completely comfortable with and which is a key part of their world.
 - We have already shared good practice with twelve schools from Swansea and Neath Port Talbot with regards to the Media Pod and our e-learning officer has presented to the ICT coordinators alongside the advisers at the termly coordinators meeting. The powerpoint presentation is available to view on the website page above.

Any further enquiries on the above information is freely available from myself at the school.

Mr S.C.Pridham (Headteacher).