

APPENDIX 6

SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

EDUCATION QUALITY INVESTIGATION

OBSERVATIONS AND SUMMARY OF THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS FROM PARENT-GOVERNORS MEETINGS

1. The Authority was slow to intervene and gave support when teachers were ill for long periods. This was especially true when it appeared that a teacher had deliberately timed his/her illness in order to increase time off work, e.g. become ill and improve a few days prior to the Summer holidays and become ill again early in the Autumn Term.
2. A poor teacher meant a poor education.
3. Even experienced Governors found it difficult to challenge the Head teacher.
4. No consistency in the roles of the Governors and how they operated. This varied from school to school and it appeared that there were no guidelines in place whereby the Authority could observe or standardise activities. This was also true in terms of what information was shared, when and by whom. Some schools gave a great deal of information to Governors, others did not.
5. Good practice within governing bodies was not shared sufficiently.
6. Difficult to have a convenient time to meet with the teachers.
7. Meetings needed without the teachers and Head teacher present.
8. An environment was required whereby governors could operate and challenge and be critical friends.
9. Was there a need to re-consider the governor's role? Was a governing body with lay members the best way of ensuring that a school acted effectively?
10. No feeling that the governing body gave a strategic lead for the school. Too much of a tendency for governors to be passive and agree with what was placed before them.

11. Welsh Governors to 'support the effective governing of every school in Wales with professional and personal support to every school governor'. No evidence to indicate that the Governors of Wales managed to achieve this.
12. Was there a need to improve the Clerk's role - e.g. an operational Clerk at Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen that had made a difference?
13. Not much evidence of Head teachers arming governors in order that they may act effectively. Indeed, there was a feeling that Head teachers preferred to have governors who acted passively rather than actively.
14. Report by the National Audit Office stating that one of the main reasons for failure in schools was weak governing. Do the governors understand their role correctly? Does the local education authority promote and give sufficient importance to the role. There was evidence of schools in Gwynedd failing – however it was evident that the governing bodies had not intervened, despite evidence of continual failure in some cases.
15. One group of governors expressed total desperation due to the lack of understanding of their role and they saw it as having no purpose and were unable to achieve.
16. Need to improve communication between the Head teachers and the governors and between governors' sub-meetings.
17. Data was swamping and drowning the majority of governors – in terms of bulk and complexity. Lack of understanding and guidance with the data was leading to an inability to be able to challenge confidently.
18. Governors received data about their own schools, however, seldom did they get a picture of the school's performance compared with other Gwynedd schools. Bearing in mind that there were only 14 secondary schools in Gwynedd, this would not be too difficult a task.