



Ysgol Uwchradd LLANIDLOES High School

GOFAL

Giving Opportunities For All to Learn



MINUTES

Llanidloes Schools' Federation Governing Body Meeting; Wednesday 2 July 2025, 6.30 pm at the secondary school

PRESENT

Clare Bound, Daniel Owen, Elen Chenetier, Linda Broughall, Louise Jones, Sarah Purdy, Adrian Foulkes, Christoph Schultz, Lisa Ashton, Gareth Morgan, Lisa E Davies, Sally Fowler, Megan Higgs

IN ATTENDANCE

Richard Williams (secondary school deputy headteacher), Sue Bound (secondary school business manager), Helen Rees (clerk)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Margot Jones, Jamie Jones, Jordan Davies and Heather Willis.

The meeting was quorate, therefore business proceeded.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST/BUSINESS INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. MEMBERSHIP

There would be a primary school parent governor vacancy due to disqualification at the beginning of August. Nominations would be requested at the start of the Autumn term.

It was noted that the County Councillors representing the town were not LA governors, but that there were not currently any vacancies on the governing body.

4. BUSINESS OF MEETING

It was agreed to follow the order of business as set out in the agenda. No items were identified to be discussed under 'any other business'.

Megan Higgs joined the meeting

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting of the governing body held on 30 April were confirmed and would be filed in the schools' file.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT INCLUDED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

Governors asked if more detailed budget reports were available yet and were told that the secondary school business manager was working on different models.

7. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT, SECONDARY SCHOOL

It was resolved according to The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005, Section 48 that part of this item be minuted as confidential.

The headteacher told governors that the report had been uploaded late so he would be happy to answer any questions once governors had had time to read it. Governors were told that there would be several staffing changes in the Autumn term.

The headteacher told governors that the many additional activities offered by staff contributed greatly to the richness of the life of the school. These activities included a daily breakfast club, representation at athletics competitions, a battlefields trip, Duke of Edinburgh awards and a French exchange.

Governors asked for an update on progress on all five Estyn recommendations.

The headteacher told governors that there had been significant progress on Recommendation 1: ensure that leaders prioritise precisely the aspects of provision that need the most improvement. The SDP had been streamlined and additional management time had been allocated. Two members of staff had completed the LA Pedagogy Lead programme. Line management had been strengthened with regular meetings sharply focussed on improving the quality of teaching and skills progression. Professional learning was concentrated on securing improvements in precise aspects of provision highlighted in both the inspection report and the school's QA activities and external coaching had been brokered for the new SLT appointees. All staff were collaborating well to consider the impact of improvement planning on pupils' learning.

There had also been considerable work on Recommendation 2: improve the quality of teaching to address the shortcomings noted in the report and Recommendation 3: ensure that there is a well-co-ordinated and understood approach to the progressive development of pupils' skills. Teaching and Learning leadership capacity had been increased following the inspection, followed by a leadership review and restructure. Staff took part in professional learning briefings to discuss best practice and pedagogy. These were focussed on the core priorities and addressed challenge, pace and independent learning. Mike Gershwin, WG professional learning lead, had delivered a series of training sessions. The school had received one set of independently verified data since the inspection which showed that pupils had exceeded their expected outcomes in most curriculum areas. There was a slightly below average value-added residual in Literacy, but this was improved from the previous year. The headteacher told governors that the improved level of challenge across the curriculum resulted in many pupils making strong progress as demonstrated by the high value-added residuals.

Recommendation 4: improve school attendance. Governors were told that attendance was now 90.7%; however, the attendance for the outgoing Year 11, who left school on 31 May, was 86%, so when this was disaggregated the figure was further improved. Governors commented that there had been some instances of pupils being recorded as absent when they were present in school and of those attending school trips not being correctly coded. Governors were told that Go4Schools and SIMS did not always synchronise correctly; Jordan Davies would be asked to investigate any anomalies.

Work on Recommendation 5: address the health and safety issue identified during the inspection was nearly complete. Signage would be installed and the entry intercoms should be commissioned by 4 July. Governors asked whether sixth form students could come and go freely as before. Governors were told that a system of students signing in and out at Reception would be trialled and assessed. Governors felt that it was important that sixth form students were treated differently to other pupils and that independence was encouraged, especially as colleges did not have an expectation that students were on site when not in lessons. Governors asked whether the sixth form room facilities were suitable and were told that the room had recently been refreshed. Feedback from students was that they enjoyed the area and it had been noticed that some were still there at 6.00 pm. It was agreed that Year 11 pupils who were not planning to enrol in the sixth form would be asked for feedback on their next steps and reasons in order to better understand and plan provision.

The headteacher told governors that the LA Head of School Improvement and Learning, the SIA and the chair and vice chair of the governing body had recently met with him to review progress and data. All except the headteacher had felt that a six month extension of the Estyn review would be beneficial. Governors had felt that there had been good progress on the recommendations but that the new leadership structure was still in its infancy and progress should be demonstrated to be stable and embedded. An extension would ensure a continued high level of support from LA officers, facilitating further progress. The headteacher commented that LA support would continue and that he had requested a further meeting with the Head of Service before her meeting with the Estyn inspector. Governors asked how staff felt and were told that there was general agreement that there had been sufficient good progress on the recommendations. Governors agreed that there had been some areas of strong progress, for example, in skills progression and site security, but that there would always be areas identified for improvement.

The headteacher told governors that he had spoken to the Estyn inspector for 45 minutes on 30 June and had asked if any further evidence was needed. The inspector had said that all areas had been addressed. The inspector would meet with the Head of Service on 11 July to triangulate information and would give verbal feedback at the end of this meeting. The outcome would then be formally communicated to the school.

The business manager gave governors a budget update. The concerns regarding the new budget software had been raised with LA officers and echoed by other business managers. A new budget software package would be introduced from 31 March 2026.

8. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT, PRIMARY SCHOOL

The headteacher told governors that Support Visit 2 with the school's SIA, Linda Green, had taken place on 26 June. All the Senior Leadership Team had been involved in the joint monitoring exercise which had included book scrutiny, listening to learners and a learning walk.

It was found that there had been considerable progress on Priority 1, to develop consistent planning for progression across the curriculum (including improving opportunities for parental engagement in learning and progression). The SIA had recognised the substantial work undertaken by the deputy headteacher and Foundation Learning lead with Welsh Government colleagues. The QA meetings had had a positive impact on planning for progression, ensuring consistency and effectiveness.

The Support Visit had also highlighted significant progress on Priority 2, to improve pupils' writing skills in English. The recent focus of this had been on spelling and punctuation which had been found to have a positive impact on other areas of writing skills such as handwriting. The rationale for the focus was that generally in schools it had been found that children's reading ages had increased but spelling ages had decreased, partially due to the influence of social media and online games which put little emphasis on spelling accuracy. The SIA had been offered all the children's books for scrutiny and had found evidence of considerable progress which she judged would have been worthy of a spotlight at an Estyn inspection. Pupil questionnaires had showed that they were enjoying their learning. Governors asked if weekly spelling tests were still used and were told that research had shown that they

were not the most effective means of improving spelling. The Spelling Shed programme addressed all four aspects of spelling in a sophisticated way that included detailed teaching plans. Phonics was still taught, but in addition to the other elements. It was offered to present the research to the Curriculum and Strategic Planning Committee or the Governing Body in the Autumn term.

The headteacher told governors that the main focus of work had been on Priorities 1 and 2, but there had also been progress on Priority 3, to provide more purposeful opportunities for pupils to improve their work in response to feedback. Evidence showed that there was improvement of pupils' work following feedback and this would be built on next year.

At the Support Visit it had been agreed that the priorities of the SDP would remain for another year, to be finalised following receipt of the visit report. An additional priority of achieving the Cymraeg Campus gold award would be added.

Governors were told that the school had been asked to document spending of the £50K surplus forecast at the end of 2027-28. This had been reduced to £3K, largely by factoring in changes in staffing costs, for example, a 1:1 TA would be required in September, but the cost of this would not be received until 2026. The LA had agreed that a new plan would not be required.

The headteacher told governors that there would be several staffing changes in September. Lisa Ashton would become acting headteacher for at least two terms and interviews for an acting deputy headteacher would take place on 3 July. A teacher who had been on long-term sick leave would return to their full-time position in September. Two teachers would return on a 0.8 FTE basis, fixed-term for one year. The Specialist Centre TA had been appointed to an HLTA role in the school on a 0.6 FTE basis to provide PPA cover. A replacement Specialist Centre TA had been appointed. Two replacement staff had been appointed to the breakfast club.

9. CROCO-DOCO-DILE PLAYGROUP

The headteacher told governors that no substantive update was available. The playgroup planned to open a Flying Start provision in September so the headteacher had requested a draft Heads of Terms, but this had not been received. It was noted that, although PCC were the owners of the premises, governors had a duty to protect the school's delegated budget. It was agreed that it was important that the provision should cover their full running costs.

10. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Governors were told that the Curriculum and Strategic Planning Committee had met on 14 May. Progress made by both schools on their SDP priorities had been considered. The LA plans for post-16 provision transformation had been discussed in detail. All governors were encouraged to attend the forthcoming stakeholder engagement meetings, the first of which would be on 14 July at 6.15 pm at Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd in Newtown.

The chair of the Staffing and Finance Committee told governors that their meeting planned for 25 June had been cancelled.

11. HEALTH AND SAFETY

All issues had been covered in the headteachers' reports.

12. SAFEGUARDING

There were no issues to be discussed.

13. POLICIES AND PUBLICATIONS

Governors were told that the new cluster attendance policies followed a new LA template which had been considered by the cluster and included procedures specific to each school. The policies included provision for the schools to request the issue of fixed penalty notices for non-attendance following a rigorous procedure. The cluster transition policy had been reviewed by the cluster and was unchanged; governors were reminded that this policy had to be published by the start of the Autumn term. The secondary school curriculum summary had been reviewed with no substantive changes. Governors agreed to adopt all policies and publications as circulated.

14. GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT

Governors were told that Sarah Purdy and Megan Higgs had attended the Governors' Summer Conference. Richard Jones, LA Director of Education, and Anwen Orrells, LA Head of School Improvement and Learning, had presented an update on the LA's recent Estyn report. They emphasised that education should be central to all departmental working. An integrated business plan had been developed in response to the report which included specific targets, for example, that the eleven secondary schools, all-age schools and PRUs currently in an Estyn category should be reduced to one.

Governors had commented on the lack of County Councillor representation both at the conference and on governing bodies. The new accounting system had been discussed.

The conference had heard a presentation from a school that had come out of a category and improved the working of their governing body. Key to this had been a shift of focus away from public perception and onto pupils. An audit of governor skills had proved useful.

Eurig Towns, LA Service Manager for School Improvement, had spoken about the importance of governors understanding and questioning SDPs and had asked how the LA could help governors to become more effective. Some ideas had been to facilitate cluster governor meetings, provide a named contact for governors and share good practice, including visits to other governing body meetings.

Marianne Evans, LA Head of Transforming Education, had discussed post-16 transformation. Many governors had felt that the LA's preferred option was not viable. County Councillor Gareth Jones had said that, as the council had not provided costings for their proposals, he had worked on figures and six or seven smaller hubs would be more cost-effective than two large hubs.

Sarah Purdy would ask for the presentations to share with governors.

15. DOCUMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNING BODY AND/OR CLERK

Governors were reminded that they would be warmly welcomed to the forthcoming Year 6 performance of The Lion King Jr, the Design and Technology Exhibition and the secondary school Summer Concert.

The vice chair told governors that the chair had sent some words to be read to the primary school headteacher at her last meeting of the governing body. The chair commented that it had been a privilege to work together over the past seven years and thanked her for her dedication to welfare of the children, creation of an amazing learning

atmosphere and care and loyalty to staff. The school was happy and thriving for which the whole community was grateful. The chair also thanked the headteacher for her strong and capable leadership.

The headteacher was presented with a bouquet and governors wished her well for the future. The headteacher thanked governors for their encouragement and support and for allowing her to take opportunities for professional development. Governors were told that the school would be in very safe hands with the new acting headteacher and a good team of staff.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS AS, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, IS OF SUFFICIENT URGENCY TO WARRANT CONSIDERATION

There were no such items.

17. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

It was resolved according to The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005, Section 48 that part of item 7 be minuted as confidential.

18. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Governors were asked to notify any such items to the clerk.

19. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Full governing body

24 September 2025

Curriculum and strategic planning committee

Autumn term 2025

Staffing and finance committee

Autumn term 2025