



Ysgol Uwchradd LLANIDLOES High School

GOFAL

Giving Opportunities For All to Learn



MINUTES

Llanidloes Schools' Federation Governing Body Meeting; Wednesday 2nd December 2020, 6.30 pm via Teams on Hwb

PRESENT

Margot Jones, Daniel Owen, Elen Chennetier, Jamie Jones, Kelly Hawkins, Karen Swann, Linda Broughall, Ruth Davies, Lauren Morris, Alun Moses, Clare Bound, Dan Craig, Adrian Foulkes

IN ATTENDANCE

Catrin Taylor (high school deputy headteacher), Jane Jerman (high school assistant headteacher), Lisa Ashton (primary school deputy headteacher), Jim Rees (high school business manager), Sue Bound (cluster business manager), Helen Rees (clerk)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Meirion Jones, Christoph Schultz and Diane Jones-Poston

The meeting was quorate, therefore business proceeded

The chair thanked the headteachers and staff of both schools on behalf of the governing body for their hard work and dedication every day. As events moved and changed at pace through the course of the pandemic, the running of both schools had always been calm, efficient and well-planned. It was noted that pupils had also adapted well to changing circumstances in unsettling times and taken new ways of working in their stride.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST/BUSINESS INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made relating to items on this agenda.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Mrs Ann Lewis had resigned as the high school staff governor. She was thanked and will be missed on the governing body. The clerk was asked to thank her for her work. Mr Alun Moses had been elected as the new high school staff governor and was welcomed to the governing body.

Ffion Snape and Rhys Mills have been elected by the school council as associate pupil governors and will be invited to future meetings of the full governing body.

4. BUSINESS OF MEETING

It was agreed to follow the order of business as set out in the agenda. Arrangements for the last week of term will be considered under Any Other Business.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting of the governing body held on 23rd September 2020 were confirmed and will be filed in the schools' file.

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

There were no matters arising.

7. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT TO GOVERNORS, PRIMARY SCHOOL

Support Visit 1 with the school's Challenge Adviser, Eurig Towns, had taken place. The focus had been on well-being, with impact assessments considered including: pupil engagement through lockdown, blended learning plans and the use of grant funding including the Accelerating Learning Grant (ALG).

The main progress made on the School Development Plan (SDP) had been around well-being. The further investment had been made to develop the well-being centre and a dedicated section on the website will be added imminently.

There had not been as much monitoring activity as usual, but all pupils have had numeracy, literacy and well-being assessments. These will be repeated later in the year to ensure that pupils are meeting their targets. The headteacher and/or ALNCo have met with all class teachers to review every pupil, to ensure that their needs are met and extra support provided as required. Whilst conducting well-being learning walks, the headteacher had noticed an improvement in eye contact – the reason for this was unknown, but could be that wearing a face covering encourages focus on the eyes.

It was noted that attendance was the highest that it has been for four years, as high as 98% one day last week. This could be due to very few requests being received for in-term holidays, a decrease in general illness due to the extra cleaning and hand hygiene measures and parents wanting children to attend school whenever possible in uncertain times.

Staff absence in the 'other' category has increased due to members of staff having to self-isolate, either for themselves or with their own children.

Some capital work on the premises has been carried out with fencing completed around the back of the school, and new sockets, data points and wireless access points installed. New carpets have been measured up and should be fitted shortly but work on a secure lobby is yet to be started. The headteacher thanked Diane Jones-Poston for her help in getting these works prioritised.

There is an on-going safeguarding issue for some bus children who are dropped off at school as early as 8.25 am because their bus then has to travel on to Ysgol Dyffryn Trannon (YDT). Ysgol Gynradd Llanidloes (YGL) staff are not responsible for pupils until 8.45 am. Due to the need to keep classes bubbles intact, these pupils cannot be looked after in one place meaning that all ten classes have to be ready to receive these children when they arrive. Staff have not complained about this but it is not a sustainable solution, so the headteacher has asked the Local Authority (LA) to put in place an agreement with the parents of these children for them to join their class bubble in the

breakfast club. This has not yet been forthcoming, so the headteacher has put interim parental agreements in place. The other issue is that the children whose final destination is YDT leave their feeder buses in the YGL bus bay to board the YDT bus. It is not clear who is responsible for their safety during this changeover, which used to take place in the Gro car park. The headteacher is awaiting clarification from the LA. Governors commented that problems with buses were longstanding with many issues for the headteacher to unpick; they would be pleased to see them finally resolved. The high school had also been affected, with buses waiting in their bus bay causing a traffic jam.

8. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT TO GOVERNORS, HIGH SCHOOL

The headteacher had circulated a summary of the All Wales Core Data Set as produced for the school by Ceredigion officers. Performance data for this year will not be used by any external bodies for monitoring purposes as grade inflation across the sector meant that the data was not a reliable indicator of performance. However, it was noted that the summary showed an improvement in all key performance indicators, including post-16. Baseline data indicated that last years' Year 11 were the most able cohort for some time.

There had been an increase in pupils entitled to free school meals (eFSM), with more than 11% of the current Year 7 eFSM. It was not clear whether or not this was connected to the pandemic but was a shift in the socio-economic demography of the school.

Support Visit 1 with the Challenge Adviser, Yan James, and the chair and vice chair of the governing body was very positive.

The number on role continued to rise and currently stands at 649 pupils. The incoming Year 7 in September 2021 will be another large cohort.

The area between the tennis courts and canteen will be prepared by the school in preparation for the installation of a new pitch.

There had been several very positive meetings with the LA and other secondary headteachers regarding post-16 provision. It had been agreed to focus on meeting the needs of middle ability students by extending the curriculum breadth. The aim will be for each secondary school to offer one additional A-level option and one additional BTEC option through e-Sgol delivery while maintaining the quality of provision.

The LA Post-16 Transformation Team are considering different governance models, with the possibility of a three-school partnership between Llanidloes, Bro Hyddgen and Newtown. If this is adopted, travel for students will be kept to a minimum.

The headteacher asked that a governor schedule a meeting of the Post-16 committee, to include all members of the Post-16 leadership team. Margot agreed to action this.

9. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The primary school SDP had been discussed at agenda item 7.

The secondary school SDP had been updated with the first milestone review. Much school-to-school support continues, but electronically rather than face-to-face. Following a curriculum strategy meeting, Catrin Taylor has condensed the calendar of embedded monitoring activities. Richard Williams has undertaken a staff well-being survey, the results of which will be shared with governors.

Catrin Taylor oversees staff training and development. Dan Craig has offered extensive and very welcome support to school staff regarding digital delivery and blended learning. Jamie Jones has shared his humanities planning to help colleagues prepare for the new curriculum in 2022.

Governors were pleased to see the schools carrying on their good work in difficult circumstances and appreciative of the extra work put in by all staff.

10. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Daniel Owen and Elen Chennetier left the meeting

a. Headteacher Performance Management Appraisal

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

Daniel Owen and Elen Chennetier re-joined the meeting

b. Staffing and Finance, 18th November

The committee had discussed the school budgets in the light of the primary school finance surgery on 2nd October and the secondary school finance surgery on 15th October. Feedback from LA officers had been very positive. The primary school had submitted a spending plan for their projected surplus, but the outcome was not yet known.

11. SCHOOL BUDGETS

The secondary school budget was felt to be in a strong position, showing a recovery from a £196K deficit to a projected surplus at the current year end. Significant investment has been made in the IT infrastructure and additional staffing. More IT investment is planned for. Teacher pay scale increases of 3.75% rather than the 2.75% that had been planned for were notified the day before the finance surgery. It was still unknown how much of the increase in salary costs will be offset by increased WG funding, although it was noted that the cost could potentially be absorbed by the budget surplus. The school had benefitted from changes to the funding formula and had received additional grant funding, including the Accelerating Learning Grant and a Professional Learning Network grant as well as EIG and PDG. An additional Post-16 teacher will probably be required from September 2021, but the cost of this had already been built into the budget.

The business manager commented that the future needs of the school were well planned for with pupils benefitting from investment in IT, music and the Gofal centre yet the budget showed an increasing year-on-year surplus through to 2023-24. Several high definition screens had been installed across the school, with more planned for, together with a second AppleMac suite to be used as a bookable resource.

The primary school budget showed a bottom-line surplus for this financial year, but a cumulative loss in future years eroding the surplus by 2023-24. The cluster business manager was thanked for her help in applying for many grants. Some EIG funding had been used to top-up investment in IT hardware, and the school had received additional grant funding for being part of a Professional Learning Network focussing on Expressive Arts and independent learning. The deputy headteacher had joined a research programme looking at education across Wales. The school had saved money by using in-house expertise to provide DCF support for both colleagues and pupils, rather than having to buy in. The Accelerating Learning Grant which was intended to fund extra staffing rather than resources, had been used to provide additional booster sessions for pupils with a particular focus on numeracy and well-being.

The total overspend for this year was projected to be £31K, meaning that not all desired investments will be affordable. The headteacher had joined the LA funding review panel with a view to representing the interests of large, single stream primary schools who lost out in last year's changes. A healthy grant income is making the budget practicable and governors thanked the headteacher for her prudent management.

12. SCHOOL FUND ACCOUNTS

- a. Primary school, 2017-18 and 2018-19

Governors approved these accounts as circulated.

- b. Secondary school, 2018-19

Governors approved these accounts as circulated.

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY, INCLUDING COVID-19

Updated COVID-19 school risk assessments had been circulated to governors. It was noted that the advice to secondary schools regarding the wearing of face coverings had changed and that face coverings were now expected to be worn in all areas outside the classrooms, including outside. Certain exceptions had been made, for example, for exercising.

The primary school had advised all parents that WG guidance was for parents to wear face coverings on the school premises at drop off and pick up times. Most parents were following this advice. David Hurst, Local Authority Health and Safety officer, had provided useful advice to the school regarding the risk assessment.

Governors approved the risk assessments.

14. GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS

The annual report to parents must be produced by each school and distributed to parents by the end of the year. The secondary report had already been circulated to governors and the primary report had been drafted and is awaiting the LA's response to the plan for the spending of the budgetary surplus.

15. GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT

The training brochure for the year 2020-21 had been circulated to all governors. Induction training and Using Data for School Improvement training remain mandatory for all governors; the clerk will send each governor a list of training that they have completed.

16. DOCUMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS AND/OR CLERK

There were no such items.

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

The primary headteacher had attended a task and finish group meeting which included other headteachers, union representatives and LA officers, regarding the opening of schools for the last week of term. No final decision had yet been made at LA level, but schools had noted that some families are choosing to self-isolate before seeing extended family at Christmas. There had been two recent positive cases in primary school pupils. Schools will consider safeguarding needs and potential childcare issues as well as community views before deciding whether to move to online learning for the last week of term. The view of the LA was that they very much want schools to remain open but debate with headteachers was robust. The LA had asked schools to consider enhancing their risk assessments to decrease risk. However, any improvements considered possible had already been made on a rolling basis.

It was noted that other local secondary schools are considering alternative arrangements for the last week of term such as resuming the firebreak model or each tutor group forming their own bubble for all teaching. Although the schools would prefer to support any central decision made by the LA, they may need to make a local decision in the event of increased cases in the community. If this is considered to be the case, governors agreed to delegate the decision to a committee of the chair, vice-chair, the two headteachers and a community governor. Advice would also be taken from LA officers and union representatives.

The secondary school teacher governor told governors that he is hoping to offer after school or Saturday morning sessions to parents when safe to do so, focussing on IT and communications for business use. The aim of this re-skilling would be to play a part in improving the mental health and well-being of the community after the pandemic. Governors were pleased to support this offer.

A governor commented that, although staff and parents appreciated the support of the majority of governors, it had been disappointing to note that some LEA governors had not attended governing body meetings for some time and had not sent apologies for their absence. It was felt to be important that the local county councillors represented the interests of the federation to the LA.

18. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

It was resolved according to The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005, Section 48 that item 10 a. be minuted as confidential.

19. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Health and Safety, including COVID-19

20. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Full Governing Body

Wednesday 3rd February 2021, 6.30 pm

Wednesday 24th March 2021, 6.30 pm

Wednesday 28th April 2021, 6.30 pm

Wednesday 7th July 2021, 6.30 pm

Staffing and Finance Committee

Wednesday 20th January 2021, 6.00 pm

Wednesday 10th March 2021, 6.00 pm

Wednesday 21st April 2021, 6.00 pm

Wednesday 23rd June 2021, 6.00 pm

Curriculum and Strategic Planning Committee

Wednesday 13th January 2021, 6.30 pm

Wednesday 12th May 2021, 6.30 pm

The chair thanked the high school business manager on behalf of the governing body for his valuable service to the school for many years in a variety of roles, including as a governor and chair of governors. His expertise, support and friendship would be greatly missed. The headteacher echoed these comments and added that it had been a privilege to work together.