



Ysgol Uwchradd LLANIDLOES High School

GOFAL

Giving Opportunities For All to Learn



MINUTES

Llanidloes Schools' Federation Governing Body Meeting; Wednesday 6th December 2023, 6.30 pm at the primary school

PRESENT

Margot Jones, Daniel Owen, Elen Chenetier, Eloisa Isaac, Sarah Purdy, Adrian Foulkes, Linda Broughall

IN ATTENDANCE

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Lisa Ashton, Heather Willis, Clare Bound, Louise Jones, Christoph Schultz, Iwan James, Jamie Jones and Jordan Davies.

The meeting was not quorate, therefore it was decided to consider the agenda items and make recommendations for decisions at the next meeting of the full governing body.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST/BUSINESS INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. MEMBERSHIP

There was one vacancy for an LA governor following the end of Gareth Morgan's term of office.

The secondary school headteacher would notify the clerk of the names of the two associate pupil governors. It was noted that Llanidloes Town Council now included youth members of secondary school age.

4. BUSINESS OF MEETING

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

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of the governing body held on 27th September would be recommended for approval at the next meeting of the governing body.

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

Governors asked whether the LA had addressed the issue of a public footpath on the secondary school site and were told that the school was awaiting their response. Work on the perimeter fencing had commenced.

Governors agreed that it would be useful to carry out a skills audit at the start of the Spring term. The results would help to inform the appointment of link governors and any new governors.

7. DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS

The appointment of link governors had been discussed by the Curriculum and Strategic Planning committee and would be recommended for approval at the next meeting of the governing body.

Discussion of the Terms of Reference of the Curriculum and Strategic Planning committee would be deferred until the next meeting of the governing body.

8. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT, SECONDARY SCHOOL

The headteacher told governors that there had been significant issues with the heating since half term. Areas heated by the main boilers were not reaching minimum temperature despite the boilers running from 9.00 am on Sundays to 4.00 pm on Mondays and from midnight to 4.00 pm Tuesdays to Fridays. Engineers had finally diagnosed a faulty chip and a replacement was due to arrive from Germany on 11th December. The boiler heating the DT area had been down for one day but there had been a long-term issue with the food technology room not reaching the same temperature as the DT rooms. The food technology room had been put on a separate loop today so it would be apparent very soon if this was a solution. The heating in the music room was part of a very old system which hadn't been working correctly but had been repaired today. The boilers heating the canteens were also faulty and had been repaired today. All these issues had affected staff and student wellbeing and had necessitated the use of fan and oil radiators to heat the building as much as possible. There had been parental concerns over classroom temperatures and that prolonged exposure to cold would increase the risk of respiratory infection. There was also a mistaken belief that classroom windows had been kept open and that students had not been allowed to wear their coats indoors. Classroom windows had been kept open during the pandemic to increase ventilation, but this was no longer the case. Doors were also shut whenever possible to preserve heat. All staff had been informed at briefing that students would be allowed to keep their coats on indoors until the heating issues were resolved. It was noted that health and safety guidance suggested a minimum temperature of 16° for workplaces. It was agreed that the situation and remedial actions taken would be communicated to parents in a forthcoming newsletter.

Attendance had improved since last year to just under 90% but would remain a priority for further improvement. The number on the school roll was now 715 due to some families deciding to home educate their children. The number of fixed-term exclusions was low and there had been no complaints.

There were some long-term staff absences. Two science teachers had recently been appointed, one being Welsh-medium.

Attention was drawn to a variety of notable events, including a group of Year 8 girls who came fifth in a Cyber First national coding competition, students' enterprise projects which had raised nearly £4K for Hope House and the school receiving 20 laptops when a group of students took part in the DVLA coding challenge. Year 9 students continued to support primary school Welsh readers on a weekly basis.

Governors asked whether parents' evenings were still online and it was confirmed that they were. A recent staff survey had shown a roughly even split between those favouring online and face-to-face. A parent survey would be circulated on 7th December.

Governors asked what impact the Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) initiative had had and were told that a suite of interventions had been implemented, making it difficult to measure the specific effect of DEAR alone although the overall impact had been strong and reading ages were improving. LSAs were delivering the interventions targeted at students from the 85th to 95th centiles, higher centiles than would usually be targeted for interventions. Governors were told that numeracy would also continue to be a high priority.

9. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT, PRIMARY SCHOOL

The headteacher told governors that there had been strong progress on SDP Priority 1, to develop consistent planning for progression across the Curriculum for Wales. Staff were working collaboratively to map and ensure the progression of every learner. Staff meetings were now on a three-weekly rotation, including a full staff meeting, a meeting of AoLE teams and a meeting to plan progression. A new planning document had been compiled which had an emphasis on learner voice. It was agreed that a member of staff would be invited to present this to the next full governing body meeting. A priority would be to continue to focus on parental engagement and ensure their understanding of progression. Positive feedback from parents had been received following the recent 'meet the teacher' event and open afternoon. There had also been a noticeable increase in parental engagement, especially parents of learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM). For example, in one class, 8 out of 28 families had been represented at the meet the teacher event, none of these being eFSM. At the following open afternoon, 14 out of 28 families were represented, including 3 of the 4 eFSM. Governors agreed that this was a notable achievement and they would be interested to receive a further report at the end of the year. Governors asked whether this improvement was due to word-of-mouth and were told that multiple approaches had been used to engage as many families as possible. Building strong relationships with families had helped to identify instances of need and had a positive effect on safeguarding. Attendance had also increased to 94.8%, possibly because parents had a better understanding of the importance of children being in school.

Steady progress had been made on SDP Priority 2, to improve spelling, grammar and punctuation, and Priority 3, to develop thinking skills, in particular, numeracy reasoning and inference and deduction in reading.

Two TLR3 appointments had been made, one to support work on SDP Priority 1 and one to support the work of the ALNCo.

A cleaner had been appointed but was not yet able to start as a DBS check had not been completed. A deadline had been given for this to be done.

Governors were told that there had been a number of notable events, including a Year 6 learner winning a place in the final of the Urdd Cogurdd competition and impressive team and individual performances at a recent joint Urdd and Welsh Athletics national cross country competition. Governors commented that the recent schools' concert with Newtown Male Voice Choir had been very enjoyable.

Governors asked whether there were any long-term effects of the pandemic on learners and were told that the schools were very much still in recovery. For example, it was noticeable that Year 3/4 learners had missed their early intensive phonics lessons, although some of their delay could possibly be attributed to following both Welsh and English phonics programmes as foundation learners. All secondary school year groups had been negatively affected, following national and global trends as highlighted by recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data. Year 11 outcomes showed record residuals, demonstrating strong progress from Year 7 to Year 11; however, raw outcomes were lower following the pandemic. In recent Year 7 Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs), the highest standardised score achieved was just 118 – for reference, governors were told that the minimum to be considered More Able and Talented (MAT) was 128. Some pupils had lost focus and it was felt that some families now placed a lower value on education. However, it was noted that a teacher who had recently transferred from a school in a deprived inner-city area had commented on pupils' work ethic and good behaviour.

10. SCHOOL MONITORING CALENDARS

The monitoring calendars for both schools had been published in the governor visit protocol. The next monitoring events specifically for governors were during the week commencing 22nd January at the primary school, listening to learners, effective learning in the challenge areas, and on 21st February at the secondary school, listening to learners and work scrutiny. Governors asked to be sent reminders closer to the events.

11. GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS

It was agreed that Margot Jones and Adrian Foulkes would meet to compile the Governors' Annual Report to Parents.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The primary school headteacher told governors that the installation of a dropped kerb adjacent to the pedestrian access to the site had been requested to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

13. SAFEGUARDING

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

14. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The minutes of the Curriculum and Strategic Planning committee meetings on 11th October and 22nd November had been circulated to governors. The meeting on 11th October had been an additional meeting to finalise the Governor Visit Protocol and Guidance 2023-24. At the meeting on 22nd November, Adrian Foulkes had been elected as chair of the committee and Sarah Purdy as vice chair.

Link governors had been appointed to each SDP priority for both schools and it had been agreed that this role would not be onerous but would help to strengthen governors' understanding of the work of the schools and inform their discussions. It had been proposed that the headteachers should each link to one priority at the other school with the aim of strengthening federation working, but it was agreed that it would be beneficial for non-staff governors to take on these roles. Linda Broughall agreed to be link governor for the secondary school Priority 5 (to improve leadership at all levels, especially in terms of impact on improving progression in numeracy, literacy and digital skills) and Christoph Schultz would be asked to be link for the primary school Priority 3 (to develop thinking skills, in particular, numeracy reasoning and inference and deduction in reading). School lead staff would contact link governors to discuss monitoring for the year. It was noted that completion of the skills audit would help to inform future appointments of link governors. Governors asked whether further training regarding the Curriculum for Wales was available and it was agreed that the primary school pedagogical lead would lead a discussion on this at the next meeting of the governing body. The chair of the committee planned to meet with the primary school headteacher a week before each governing body meeting at which a headteacher's report was an agenda item. They would discuss this report to identify items requiring the attention of the governing body. The chair of the governing body would meet with the secondary school headteacher for the same purpose. Various governor school visit forms had been received and discussed by the committee.

The Staffing and Finance committee had met on 18th October when Clare Bound had been elected as chair and Linda Broughall as vice chair. Governors acknowledged that budget management at both schools had been very effective and their budgetary positions compared favourably to other similar schools.

Primary school issues discussed included the reduced funding available for refugee children which meant that 1:1 support could not be funded in the Spring term. Supply costs were currently higher than budgeted for so would be carefully managed for the rest of the year. It was noted that the headteacher and deputy headteacher had undertaken additional work, bringing in significant additional funding. The cost of the breakfast club remained at £1.00 per child per session and free for children eligible for free school meals. The cost of additional staffing required to extend the school day to enable school transport routes to be rationalised continued to be explored with the LA.

The secondary school would submit a deficit recovery plan. Significant investment had been made in IT hardware, including the extensive provision of smart boards in teaching areas. Supply costs had risen due to staff absence and the national shortage of Welsh-medium supply teachers had necessitated a review of timetabling in some curriculum areas. Governors were told that the LA was considering the introduction of new financial management software.

15. POLICIES AND PUBLICATIONS

It was agreed that governors would recommend the approval of the Complaints Policy and Disciplinary Procedure at the next meeting of the governing body. The primary school Complaints Officer, as named in the Complaints Policy, was now Clare Bound as the previous Complaints Officer's term of office had ended. The Disciplinary Procedure followed a new LA template and applied to all staff. Previously, there had been separate procedures for teaching and non-teaching staff.

16. GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT

It was agreed that the clerk would send a reminder to those governors yet to complete their mandatory training. The LA strongly recommended that all governors completed safeguarding training, to be renewed every three years. The clerk would circulate details of this training.

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

There were no such items.

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

There were no such items.

19. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

It was resolved according to The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005, Section 48 that item 13 be minuted as confidential.

20. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

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

21. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Full governing body

Wednesday 31st January

Wednesday 13th March

Wednesday 24th April (budget approval 2023-24)

Wednesday 3rd July

Curriculum and strategic planning committee

Wednesday 28th February

Wednesday 12th June

Staffing and finance committee

Wednesday 24th January

Wednesday 17th April (budget approval 2023-24)