



Ysgol Uwchradd LLANIDLOES High School

**GOFAL**

Giving Opportunities For All to Learn



## MINUTES

**Llanidloes Schools' Federation Governing Body Meeting; Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021, 6.30 pm via Teams on Hwb**

## PRESENT

Margot Jones, Daniel Owen, Elen Chennetier, Kelly Hawkins, Linda Broughall, Lauren Morris, Clare Bound, Dan Craig, Lorna Morris, Diane Jones-Poston, Gareth Morgan, Ruth Davies, Christoph Schultz, Rhys Mills, Ffion Snape

## IN ATTENDANCE

Lisa Ashton (primary school deputy headteacher), Helen Rees (clerk)

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

*The meeting was quorate, therefore business proceeded.*

### 2. LA ADMISSIONS POLICY: TO CONSIDER LETTER TO PARENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS AND LETTER OF RESPONSE FROM GOVERNORS

Sarah Quibell, LA Professional Lead for Education Support Services, had provided an update on the consultation process to the school, and Anwen Orrells, LA Challenge Adviser, had responded to the chair's email seeking clarification. The response had been circulated to governors.



Response, Anwen  
Orrells.pdf

Governors were told that secondary headteachers were generally unaware of this consultation and noted that the closing date of 1<sup>st</sup> March left little time to make representations to the LA. Anwen Orrells had stated that the reason for the proposed re-design of the catchment areas was to consolidate existing natural arrangements in clusters and the current well-established strong transition arrangements. Governors did not agree that this was the case and were concerned that, according to the proposals, Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd (YDL) would not be a feeder school for either Llanidloes or Newtown High Schools, Ysgol Carno (YC) would not be a feeder school for Llanidloes High School and Ysgol Caersws would no longer be a feeder school for Newtown High School. Under current arrangements, pupils were entitled to free transport to their nearest school or to their catchment school according to parental choice; however, there was no guarantee that this would continue to be the case from 2022.

Governors discussed the possibility that pupils in YDL or YC might not be awarded a place at Llanidloes High School if catchment areas were used to allocate places, and that if a cohort was oversubscribed a pupil may not gain, or be prioritised, for a place even if they lived closer to Llanidloes than any other secondary school. Siblings of existing

pupils also might not be awarded a place. The local geography meant that, for some pupils, the journey to their nearest school was difficult and lengthy so it was felt that there should, in some circumstances, be an overlap of catchment areas to facilitate reasonable parental choice of secondary school.

Governors felt that the provision of free school transport would potentially be inequitable to some families if rigid catchment boundaries were enforced, with each primary school feeding only one secondary school.

Governors noted that pupils from Rhayader CIW School Welsh stream would attend Ysgol Calon Cymru and from the English stream would choose either Llanidloes High School or Ysgol Calon Cymru. It was felt that the overall effect of all the proposed catchment changes would be to decrease the numbers in the Welsh stream of Llanidloes High School and that it was unfortunate that the proposals would appear to remove numbers from one Welsh stream in order to bolster another. Governors expressed disappointment at the lack of consultation before the proposals had been published. The LA admission code was clear that there should be parental consultation if they would be affected by significant change to catchment areas so the lack of transparency appeared inappropriate. Governors felt strongly that parents should be free to select their school and language of choice and that transport should be provided accordingly within reason.

Governors also commented that the local natural geographic area known as Arwystli, which applied to other catchments such as the church and medical practice, included the Carno area. A governor with personal experience of attending Ysgol Carno then Llanidloes High School emphasised the importance of maintaining parental choice of both secondary school and language medium.

The Welsh language education strategic plan published four years previously had identified Llanidloes as one of two areas in need of significant support and development. This duty to improve Welsh provision had not been supported and the current proposal boosted surrounding Welsh medium streams, but not Llanidloes. Welsh medium provision had expanded in Llanidloes High School in recent years due to the efforts of the school and the excellent provision being favourably regarded by parents.

The headteacher had asked Marianne Evans from the LA schools transformation team for advice regarding Welsh medium provision, to ask for support in realising the school's vision. The headteacher would also ask Hugh Foster Evans (LA transformation lead for Welsh language development) and Marianne Evans to join a meeting. The Welsh Government had stated their plan to increase the numbers of Welsh speakers in Wales, but the effect of the current proposals would be to decrease the number in the Llanidloes area and negate the progress already made.

The headteacher had drafted a potential letter to parents which had been circulated to governors:



Consultation  
response.docx

An article would be submitted to the County Times with the aim of informing and supporting parents with clear and balanced facts rather than causing unnecessary concern. It was hoped that the article would also reach an audience of future secondary school pupils' parents who could otherwise remain unaware of the consultation. Social media would be used to disseminate information. The headteacher would explore the use of pen portraits of a selection of pupil experiences to demonstrate potential impact on families and the benefits of choice. It was hoped to encourage a range of responses to the consultation, although it was noted that the consultation process was well underway with only a short window left for response.

## **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

### ***Full Governing Body***

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021, 6.30 pm

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021, 6.30 pm

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021, 6.30 pm

### ***Staffing and Finance Committee***

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021, 6.00 pm

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021, 6.00 pm

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021, 6.00 pm

### ***Curriculum and Strategic Planning Committee***

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021, 6.30 pm