



Ysgol Uwchradd LLANIDLOES High School

**GOFAL**

Giving Opportunities For All to Learn



## **MINUTES**

**Llanidloes Schools' Federation Governing Body Meeting; Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023, 6.30 pm via Teams on Hwb**

## **PRESENT**

Margot Jones, Daniel Owen, Elen Chenetier, Karen Swann, Eloisa Isaac, Lorna Morris, Christoph Schultz, Adrian Foulkes, Heather Willis, Lisa Ashton, Jordan Davies, Jamie Jones, Kelly Hawkins, Elin Schultz

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

Catrin Taylor (secondary school deputy headteacher), Richard Williams (secondary school assistant headteacher), Jane Jerman (secondary school assistant headteacher), Sue Bound (business manager), Helen Rees (clerk)

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Linda Broughall, Gareth Morgan, Diane Jones-Poston, Guto Thomas-Young and Clare Bound.

***The meeting was quorate, therefore business proceeded.***

It was agreed that the governing body would resume face-to-face meetings in the Summer term.

### **2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST/BUSINESS INTERESTS**

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

### **3. MEMBERSHIP**

Governors were told that there were still two LA governor vacancies. The LA would be asked for a progress report.

### **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'.

## **5. SAFEGUARDING**

The secondary school had submitted their annual safeguarding audit to the LA. Governors were told that a survey of staff, pupils and parents revealed that all stakeholders had concerns over site security. A footpath crossed the front of the site and the public accessed the sports centre at the rear of the site, so without fencing between the centre and the school the site was open with some accesses unsecured. These issues had also been raised by the School Improvement Adviser at a recent Support Visit.

### ***Kelly Hawkins joined the meeting***

David Thompson, LA Schools Estates Manager, had told the headteacher that the issue of secure accesses would be rectified in the near future. Full fencing of the site would then be planned. Mr Thompson had also assessed the building condition and would write a bid to Welsh Government for insulation and replacement doors and windows across both the primary and secondary school sites. Governors were pleased that the need for improvements had been recognised.

A consultancy company had been commissioned by the LA to survey the bus bays and car parks on both sites. Both bus lanes were two-deep with no protected pathways, and no parent drop-off zones were available. A report would be written and recommendations for improving safety made.

Following a fatal accident at a school in another county, the LA had asked schools to commission professional surveys of the condition of all trees in their grounds with a trunk diameter of more than 10 centimetres at 1.5 metres above ground level. Trees at both schools had accordingly been surveyed recently. Some minor works had been identified which would be carried out as soon as possible.

A lockdown alarm had been installed at the secondary school and a drill was planned. The primary school did not have an alarm, but used three whistle blasts as the lockdown signal. The drill had been practised with pupils, with care taken to use language which would not cause distress.

### ***Sue Bound left the meeting***

### ***Richard Williams joined the meeting***

## **6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the governing body held on 8<sup>th</sup> February were confirmed and would be filed in the schools' file.

## **7. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT INCLUDED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**

Item 3: a governor asked the clerk to write letters of thanks to governors who had recently left the governing body.

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

## **8. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Health and safety matters were included in the headteachers' reports.

## **9. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT, PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The report had been circulated to governors. The headteacher told governors that the comments for the current term had been added above the comments for the Autumn term in a different colour text, so that, by the end of the Summer term there would be a report for the full year. It was hoped that this would help governors to compile the next Governors' Annual Report to Parents.

Lisa Ashton was congratulated on achieving the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH).

Governors were thanked for attending the recent evening presentation by the eco committee. Governors were told that the pupils were disappointed not to have received a response from LA officers as they had wanted to start the initiative in the Summer term.

The headteacher highlighted the recent whole school work on the culture of reading, identified as a priority in the School Development Plan (SDP). A baseline assessment of reading ages had taken place in October, followed by four months of intensive guided reading sessions. When reading ages had been re-assessed, the majority of pupils showed very impressive progress. Governors commented that the massive measurable improvement was remarkable and asked how it had been achieved and whether the strategy could be translated to other curriculum areas. Governors were told that the approach had been very structured. Pupils had identified texts and topics to read and strategies for deduction and inference using phonics and other approaches had been taught. Pupils had taken part in additional investigations around their reading and had been involved in self-assessment and identifying their next steps for learning. There had been an emphasis on building confidence and pupils had very much enjoyed the sessions. Staff were considering how the strategies could be used in other curriculum areas.

*Jamie Jones left the meeting*

*Karen Swann joined the meeting*

*Jordan Davies joined the meeting*

Governors were invited to contact the headteacher with any questions regarding the report.

## **10. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT, SECONDARY SCHOOL**

The report had been circulated to governors. The headteacher told governors that the school had been over-subscribed again with applications for Year 7 places. The LA had refused 25 applications, of which 19 families had contacted the school and been given an appeal support pack. The headteacher had asked the LA for permission to address the panel at any appeal hearings to give information on how the cohort would be accommodated.

Governors were invited to contact the headteacher with any questions regarding the report.

## **11. POLICIES AND PUBLICATIONS**

The primary school had written a new Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy following the Welsh Government Code. A meeting had been held with parents to explain how RSE was taught to every year group and to reassure that it would be absolutely appropriate for every child. It was felt that the discussions had been helpful and that parents were more comfortable with the provision.

Governors were told that the secondary school RSE lead had written to parents three times asking for feedback, and consulted with staff to ensure good, effective provision. Some parents had expressed concerns and been reassured that the school took a careful and responsible approach.

*Jamie Jones joined the meeting*

## **12. GOVERNOR VISIT PROTOCOL AND GUIDANCE**

Governors were told that the Curriculum and Strategic Planning committee had considered how best to meet its Terms of Reference which included receiving governor visit reports. The visit protocol and guidance had been drafted and agreed by the committee, headteachers and the chair of the governing body to support governors in this function. Estyn would expect to see evidence of governors' understanding of the work of the schools. It was envisaged that the visit protocol and guidance would be a live document that would be reviewed as necessary.

A governor asked whether a staff workload assessment had been carried out, and if staff and unions had been consulted. The secondary school headteacher told governors that there had been a discussion with unions, but as governors were exercising their formal statutory responsibilities, consultation was not required. A formal workload impact assessment could be conducted.

A governor asked how governors would ascertain strengths and areas for development. It was felt that the purpose of visits was not to identify faults, but rather to celebrate the work of the schools and identify priorities in order to provide support.

A governor quoted from the School Governors' Guide to the Law which stated that governors are not responsible for collecting or monitoring data themselves, stating that this was an operational matter for headteachers and reminding governors that their role was strategic. The LA Head of Education had told a recent meeting that governors were not to observe lessons, but governors understood that they could visit lessons with the agreement of the teacher involved and that they could speak to pupils outside the classroom.

Governors were told that the Curriculum and Strategic Planning committee, which included the headteachers, had worked together to agree the document, and had taken advice from Governors Cymru Services. Governors would not want to cause stress for staff, or add to their workloads, but wanted to facilitate governors to meet their statutory responsibilities. The document deliberately did not mention lesson observations.

The primary school headteacher told governors that she was appreciative of their support and that evidence of their involvement should be documented. Staff were released to carry out evaluations, and, when governors were involved, they worked together to agree the evaluation. No additional workload was involved and feedback from staff and governors had been positive. The visit form had been in use at the primary school for many years.

Governors felt that they needed clear understanding and guidance on visits to school and would take advice from the headteachers on what was appropriate and legal.

The chair of the Curriculum and Strategic Planning committee expressed frustration that the draft document was not yet agreed, especially as advice had been taken from external sources, including the School Improvement Advisers, and commented that the document did not encourage collecting or analysing data. The committee would review the document and bring it back to the full governing body for a decision.

The secondary school headteacher told governors that he would work with staff and get their feedback, and was confident that a solution could be found by the next meeting. It would be ensured that the statutory framework was applied appropriately. The committee was thanked for their hard work and research.

The chair of the governing body told governors that a workable solution, using language acceptable to staff and governors, would be found and reiterated the thanks to the committee for their work.

### **13. GOVERNING BODY SELF-EVALUATION**

Governors felt that the self-evaluation documents as circulated were lengthy and detailed and agreed that the governing body needed to be confident in evaluating its effectiveness. It was agreed that during the Summer term, the governing body would meet face-to-face to consider some of the parts of the self-evaluation, starting with part F, Leadership and Management. It was also agreed that all governors would complete the individual self-evaluation document as a baseline. Governors were asked to return their self-evaluations to the clerk.

### **14. GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT**

Governors were reminded to inform the clerk of any training completed.

### **15. DOCUMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS AND/OR CLERK**

There were no such items.

### **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**

No items were identified.

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

#### ***Full governing body***

*Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April (budget approval 2023-24)*

*Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July*

#### ***Curriculum and strategic planning committee***

*Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May*

#### ***Staffing and finance committee***

*Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March*

*Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June*

It was agreed that an additional meeting of the Curriculum and Strategic Planning committee might be necessary.