



MINUTES

Llanidloes Schools' Federation Governing Body Meeting; Wednesday 4th December 2024, 6.30 pm at the primary school

PRESENT

Margot Jones, Clare Bound, Elen Chennetier, Eloisa Isaac, Sarah Purdy, Adrian Foulkes, Linda Broughall, Heather Willis, Jordan Davies, Louise Jones, Sally Fowler, Megan Higgs, Lisa Ashton

IN ATTENDANCE

Sue Bound (business manager), Helen Rees (clerk)

The chair welcomed governors to the meeting and read a statement regarding the current situation at the secondary school. Governors were reminded that confidential, sensitive issues were not to be further discussed.

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

The fact-finding exercise by Mr Gerard Kerslake is well underway. He has spent two days in school. We are yet to receive his final findings but I will update you as soon as I can.

It is on a sad note that we must remember Catrin Taylor, our previous Deputy Headteacher, who passed away last week. I understand it came as a shock to her family as well as the school and our sympathies go out to them. Sue has kindly sent flowers from the governors and whole school. The funeral is private, and we have no other details yet to share.

Governors shared a minute's silence to remember Mrs Taylor. Governors commented that Mrs Taylor had completed over 20 years of loyal, committed service to the school and that her love of the children had always been evident.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies had been received.

The meeting was quorate, therefore business proceeded.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST/BUSINESS INTERESTS

The annual declaration of business interests forms were circulated for completion and returned to the clerk.

There were no declarations of interest in this agenda, including in item 12.

3. MEMBERSHIP

There were no current vacancies. The two new LA governors were welcomed to their first meeting. One governor had been suspended due to non-completion of mandatory training.

4. BUSINESS OF MEETING

It was agreed to follow the order of business as set out in the agenda. It was agreed to discuss two primary school staffing matters and membership of the complaints committee under 'any other business'.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the governing body held on 25th September were confirmed and would be filed in the schools' file.

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

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

Governors asked if there had been any progress on sourcing staff absence insurance and were told that the secondary school business manager was still awaiting quotes. The primary school headteacher reported that several quotes and advice had been received. As authority for a decision had previously been delegated by the governing body, a quote for £5,400 per annum had been accepted for an initial trial period of one year. This was more expensive than the £2,600 per annum previously paid, but it was felt that the overall package of benefits would be very useful and the company had been highly recommended by other schools. Governors asked if the price had increased due to a previous high level of claims and were told that this was not the case. Staff were paid from day one of any sickness absence and the insurance cover paid out after day three.

A governor asked how an item could be added to the agenda for discussion and was told that this should be at item 4, to identify and agree all matters to be considered under "Any Other Business", although the chair had previously told governors that some sensitive ongoing matters were not for discussion at this meeting. The governor asked what the role of governors was and how they could have an impact. The headteacher advised that the role of governors was to be a representative member of their stakeholder group, rather than to represent their stakeholder group's views at meetings. If staff had issues then they should be reminded to approach their headteacher with them, not a governor. It was not always easy to find a balance, but governors were told that independent advice could always be sought from Governors Cymru Services. The chair requested that governors attend any available training in order to best understand their role. Governors were reminded that, although matters mentioned in the chair's opening statement were not for current discussion, there would be a time when discussion could be allowed.

7. PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES

Individual Governor Codes of Conduct were circulated for completion and returned to the clerk.

8. DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS

Governors had previously agreed to review the non-statutory committee structure and meeting timetable, with one committee each for the primary and secondary schools, both reporting back to the full governing body. It was envisaged that full governing body meetings would have a much greater focus on enhancing federation working. Governors recognised that the fine details needed further development and that new committee Terms of Reference would be required. It was agreed that a detailed proposal would be brought to the last governing body meeting of the year, for implementation in September. It was agreed to resume meetings of the pre-existing Staffing and Finance and Curriculum and Strategic Planning committees for the remainder of the year.

9. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT, SECONDARY SCHOOL

No report to governors was available.

10. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT, PRIMARY SCHOOL

The headteacher drew governors' attention to the FADE report which had been received following the Autumn term support visit from the LA School Improvement Adviser. The SDP, and reports on progress made on the priorities, were also included. The headteacher reminded governors that the SDP was a live document with all staff taking responsibility for working on the priorities. Governors were told that the monitoring calendar included a week in the Spring term for governors to visit and support with a specific focus, although governors were invited to arrange to visit whenever convenient. A governor commented that the checklist at the end of the SDP was thorough and a useful addition.

The headteacher told governors that there was still a significant discrepancy between the number of children with ALN recorded on Tyfu and on Teacher Centre. The headteacher would check which figure was used for band-led funding. A governor asked whether the number of ALN pupils included MAT pupils and were told that it did not. MAT pupils did not attract any additional funding, and, as a principle of the Curriculum for Wales was bespoke learning for every pupil, MAT was no longer a high priority.

The figure for staff absence was higher than usual due to two long-term absences in the first half of term.

The headteacher explained that the school was piloting a new approach to performance management (PM). The current local authority PM policy provided for teachers being set three annual objectives which did not always have an impact on teaching and learning. The pilot was for an enquiry-based research approach linked to a specific area of the SDP. The area for the current year was spelling which staff were working on collaboratively. Time was allocated, for example, in staff meetings, and staff were enjoying the research and the purposeful nature of the project. The headteacher was working with LA HR officers to draft a new PM policy, but this would probably not be in place for another year.

Kung Fu punctuation had been introduced throughout school and children were enjoying the physical approach to learning which was fun and effective.

Governors were told that there had been a rise of 33% in the number of children on the Child Protection register across the county. Governors asked whether the reason for this was known and were told that the reason was unknown but that most were due to emotional harm, which was often a result of domestic abuse. Governors were told that the trend had also been noticed in school.

Governors were invited to the school Christmas productions on Tuesday 10th December at 1.30 pm, Wednesday 11th December at 6.00 pm or Thursday 12th December at 6.00 pm, and the carol service at Trinty Chapel on Monday 16th December at 6.00 pm.

11. SCHOOL MONITORING CALENDARS

As discussed at item 10.

12. CROCS, EARLY YEARS PROVISION

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

13. GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS

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

14. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Governors were told that the local authority had installed lighting in the car parks which had improved safety for users. Governors asked whether fencing to the secondary school site had been completed and were told that the school was awaiting a response from the local authority.

The business manager told governors that one Design and Technology teacher was awaiting mandatory training on the use of a specific machine. The secondary school was awaiting a response from the training body, and in the meanwhile the member of staff had been instructed to only use the machine if a trained member of staff was present. Governors asked for this instruction to be put in writing to those concerned.

15. SAFEGUARDING

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

16. POLICIES AND PUBLICATIONS

Governors agreed to adopt the Flexible Working Policy which followed the new local authority template and applied to all school staff.

17. GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT

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

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

There were no such items.

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

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

It was agreed that all governors should be members of the complaints committee, and the other statutory committees, to be called in the order listed.

Lisa Ashton, Eloisa Isaac, Jordan Davies and Sue Bound left the meeting

20. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

It was resolved according to The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005, Section 48 that part of the chair's opening statement, part of item 6, items 12, 15 and part of item 19 be minuted as confidential.

21. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

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

22. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Full governing body

Wednesday 5th February 2025

Wednesday 19th March

Wednesday 30th April (budget approval 2024-25; first week of term)

Wednesday 2nd July

Curriculum and strategic planning committee

Wednesday 22nd January 2025

Wednesday 14th May 2025

Staffing and finance committee

Wednesday 9th April 2025 (budget approval 2025-26; last week of term)

Wednesday 18th June 2025