



MINUTES

Llanidloes Schools' Federation Governing Body Meeting; Wednesday 19 March 2025, 6.30 pm at the secondary school

PRESENT

Margot Jones, Clare Bound, Daniel Owen, Elen Chennetier, Gareth Morgan, Sarah Purdy, Adrian Foulkes, Karl Lewis, Sally Fowler, Megan Higgs, Jamie Jones, Lisa E Davies, Lisa Ashton, Heather Willis, Jordan Davies, John Owen

IN ATTENDANCE

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Linda Broughall, Christoph Schultz and Louise Jones.

The meeting was quorate, therefore business proceeded.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST/BUSINESS INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest in this agenda.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Lisa Ashton and Jordan Davies had been re-elected as teacher governors. Heather Willis had been re-elected as a staff governor and Lisa E Davies had been elected as a staff governor.

4. BUSINESS OF MEETING

It was agreed to consider item 16 at the end of the meeting. No items were identified for discussion under 'any other business'.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting of the governing body held on 12 February were confirmed and would be filed in the schools' file.

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

Governors were told that it had not been possible to resolve the issue of 'trapped time' for some secondary school teachers so the staffing and finance committee would be asked to try to find an acceptable solution.

A governor said that they understood there had been eight applications for a place in the sixth form in September 2025 and asked if there was a pro-active plan to boost this as the existence of a thriving sixth form impacted the whole community. The head of the sixth form told governors that there had been 47 applications for a place in the sixth form. The headteacher said that there was no complacency and that the school took an individual student-centred approach to admissions. Governors asked if there were entry criteria and were told that students were given clear advice and support to choose the courses that were right for them without pushing them onto pathways that didn't match their aspirations. Students had a useful option to try out subjects where there was uncertainty and taster sessions and open evenings were available. Governors asked the average number of students in the sixth form and were told there were usually around 50 in each year, with around 20 dual-registered students not being included in the number. Retention of students moving from Year 11 to Year 12 was the third highest in the local authority, and from Year 12 to Year 13 was the second highest. Students from outside the school catchment could apply for a place, but home-school transport would not be provided. Students could apply for a place at more than one post-16 provision, some applied late and some changed their minds on results day, so some fluctuation in numbers was to be expected. It was noted that the application processes for other provisions such as Shrewsbury and Hereford Colleges were open significantly before the PCC process.

The headteacher told governors that post-16 provision in Powys was under review and it was thought that some sixth forms could face closure. Llanidloes sixth form was currently the fifth largest in the county. The headteacher had been asked to provide the LA with a leadership review which would be shared with governors. Post-16 provisions in Powys were run by operational management boards who agreed the course offer, with the oversight of a strategic management board. This was felt to be an effective management model and Estyn had found that Llanidloes sixth form provided good value for money.

Governors were encouraged that there had been a good number of applications received for a sixth form place in September.

7. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT, SECONDARY SCHOOL

The headteacher apologised to governors for the late publication of the headteacher's report and told governors that questions on any aspect would be welcomed after they had read the detailed content.

There had been good progress made on recommendation 1, to ensure that leaders prioritise precisely the aspects of provision that need the most improvement, and an analysis of the impact of actions taken was included in the report.

Governors were told that recommendation 2, to improve the quality of teaching to address the shortcomings noted in the report, and recommendation 3, to ensure that there is a well-co-ordinated and understood approach to the progressive development of pupils' skills, were closely linked. There had been a focus on challenge and pace and tailored professional learning had been undertaken. First-hand evidence from the whole day Listen to Learners and Work Scrutiny events that took place termly had been used to identify precise areas for improvement in skills progression. Skills leads now routinely attended these events to inform their evaluation and planning.

There had been good progress on recommendation 4, to improve school attendance, which had now risen to over 90%. The school had put in place a variety of measures, including, on occasion, collecting pupils from home. Local authority officers had listened to concerns that there were no sanctions to be used as a last resort for parents of pupils with very low attendance and were considering the introduction of fixed penalty notices. The Education Welfare Officer had worked closely with the school to bring about improvements but had also been frustrated by

the lack of sanctions available. Anwen Orrells, Head of School Improvement and Learning, had suggested that the school considered targeting pupils with an attendance of greater than 75% rather than those with less than 50% as this could potentially have a larger and quicker impact.

LA officers had drawn up detailed plans, currently out to tender, to address the health and safety issue identified in recommendation 5. Work was due to start in May and scheduled to be finished by the end of the month.

Governors were told that the WJEC was rolling out phase one of significant changes to most GCSE qualifications. This would entail significant additional work for staff who would attend subject-specific training on 21 March. Useful information was available on the Qualifications Wales website.

8. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT, PRIMARY SCHOOL

The headteacher told governors that a new quality assurance process had been introduced with the aim of improving self-evaluation. Every teaching team held a short meeting each week to quality assure an aspect of their work on the school's priorities and were accountable for progress. Staff felt that it was an effective use of time and ensured the constant progress of action on priorities. It was suggested that these meetings could be an interesting focus for governor visits and a quick means of evaluating progress.

The draft budget had only just been received in school and was looking much improved, with a forecast cumulative surplus of £150K to carry forward from 2025-26, £122K from 2026-27 and £90K from 2027-28. In-year deficits had been decreased due to accepted VSS applications so the headteacher and finance officer were carefully considering options to spend the surplus to benefit pupils. Possibilities included decreasing class sizes or increasing TA time. Governors asked whether there was WG guidance on class sizes and were told that headteachers could not plan to start the academic year with more than 30 children in a class but that this only applied to foundation learners, not older learners. Governors were told that the largest classes were in the upper school. Budget options would be shared with governors once finalised. The headteacher was congratulated by governors on her careful budget management.

The secondary school headteacher told governors that the 2025-26 budget projected an in-year surplus of £142K and a cumulative surplus of £290K. The cumulative surplus gradually decreased in future years but a licensed budget could be delivered. It was noted that the funding formula reviews had delivered increased funding for primary schools but decreased funding for secondary schools. Powys retained a high percentage of education funding with only 73% delegated to schools. Governors asked why a debt recovery plan was needed when there was an in-year surplus and were told that a plan would not be needed for the 2025-26 budget.

Governors asked the primary school headteacher if the recent extensive roadworks had had an impact on site safety and were told that some parents had been inconvenienced, but that the contractors had been very accommodating. If it was found that road safety was improved by the works then the school would promote cycling and scooting.

The headteacher told governors that the current projected Reception intake in September was 30 children, which was slightly lower than recent years but there were often some late additions.

The Rotary Club had recently donated £500 towards continuous provision for foundation learners.

The breakfast club was attended by around 36 to 48 children every day; the cost had remained modest at £1 per child per session and free for children eligible for free school meals. The club account remained in surplus.

The secondary school headteacher told governors that there was also a thriving breakfast club at the secondary school but that the aim was to provide a breakfast for students who needed it rather than for childcare.

9. CROCO-DOCO-DILE PLAYGROUP

The headteacher and Adrian Foulkes had met regarding the proposals for Croco-doco-diles but there was no progress to report yet.

10. GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS

The primary school annual report had been circulated to parents on 21 February. No feedback had been received.

The secondary school report had been finalised but not yet circulated to parents.

11. SCHOOL FUND ACCOUNTS, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The primary school school fund accounts and audit certificate for 2023-24 were received and accepted by the governing body.

The secondary school school fund accounts and audit certificates for 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 would be considered at the next meeting of the Staffing and Finance committee.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The primary school headteacher told governors that a repair to the second water leak was still awaited. Access holes had been dug at each end of the affected pipe, outside the upper school girls' and boys' cloakrooms. The holes had been fenced off with Harris fencing, but children could not use the cloakroom doors to access the yard. The work would involve digging up the path outside the four classrooms at the back of the school, so their fire exit routes would be compromised. This would be risk assessed and alternative plans decided on a daily basis. To minimise water loss, the water supply was being turned off every evening and on again in the morning. Karl Lewis offered to liaise with LA officers to progress the works. Governors asked if the issue was due to the age of the system and were told that the initial leak caused when the 3G pitch was constructed was due to inaccurate mapping of the pipes and the decision to mend the damaged pipe with plastic rather than metal fittings. LA officers were in the process of drawing up accurate plans.

Governors were told that there were also ongoing issues with the schools' sewage system which was a lengthy network with a small gradient resulting in frequent blockages. LA officers had determined that a pumping station was required as a long-term solution. Karl Lewis offered to try to progress the work.

Terry Hampton, LA Health and Safety Adviser, would inspect the secondary school DT department the following week, checking training records, policies and inventories.

Governors asked if there was a Maternity Policy to cover pregnant women and new mothers and were told that the LA policy was used.

13. SAFEGUARDING

The primary school headteacher told governors that the school's annual safeguarding audit had been updated in February for submission to the LA and was included in the headteacher's report to governors. Information from a recent questionnaire for parents would be analysed and added.

The secondary school headteacher told governors that Michael Gedrim, LA Safeguarding Lead, was due to visit in June. Feedback from governors had been incorporated into the safeguarding audit update.

14. POLICIES AND PUBLICATIONS

The chair reminded governors of the importance of reading school policies. The primary school RSE Policy had been reviewed; governors were told that there had been no substantive changes and agreed to adopt the policy.

The primary school Pupil Discipline Policy had been reviewed and the sanctions updated to remove the possible sanction of missing school trips or visits. The headteacher told governors that this sanction had never been used and that it was felt to be an important principle that all pupils were entitled to receive rich and varied experiences. The secondary school headteacher commented that this sanction was used on occasion. Governors agreed to adopt the policy.

15. GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT

Governors were encouraged to attend training events and reminded to notify the clerk of any training completed.

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

There was no such business.

18. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

There were no such items.

19. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No items were identified.

20. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Full governing body

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

Wednesday 2 July

Curriculum and strategic planning committee

Wednesday 14 May

Staffing and finance committee

Wednesday 2 April (budget approval 2025-26)

Wednesday 18 June

Governors were reminded that the date of the Staffing and Finance committee meeting had been changed from 9 April to 2 April.

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

The chair of the governing body read a letter of resignation, with effect from 31 August 2025, from the primary school headteacher. The headteacher told governors that the decision to resign had not been taken lightly and that it had been a privilege to lead the school, but it was now time to explore other opportunities and challenges. The headteacher thanked governors and the whole school community for their support and committed to working closely with the governing body to ensure a smooth handover.

Governors expressed sadness but thanked the headteacher for her successful and dedicated leadership, following in the footsteps of her father, Bryn Davies. The headteacher was also thanked for her support of cluster schools.

The headteacher asked governors to keep her resignation strictly confidential until 3.30 pm on 20 March as it was important for everyone concerned to hear through the correct channels.

Before leaving the meeting, a governor asked the primary school headteacher to thank staff for leading the recently returned trip to Llangrannog which had been greatly enjoyed by pupils.

Lisa Ashton, Jamie Jones, Lisa E Davies, Heather Willis, Jordan Davies, John Owen, Richard Williams, Jane Jerman and Sue Bound left the meeting

The chair and headteacher told governors that a recruitment timetable had been drawn up, allowing for a handover period of between four and six weeks. The post would be advertised on 7 April with a closing date of 11 May. Shortlisting would be on 19 May and two days of interviews would be in the week commencing 2 June. Two open afternoons would be available for potential candidates to visit the school, one each in the Spring and Summer terms.

It was agreed that the selection panel would be comprised Margot Jones, Clare Bound, Linda Broughall, Adrian Foulkes, Sally Fowler and Sarah Purdy.

Governors were told that, if an external candidate was appointed, they would need to give notice so possibly would not be able to take up the appointment until January 2026. Governors agreed that the headteacher would ask the deputy headteacher to become acting headteacher if necessary.