



Ysgol Uwchradd LLANIDLOES High School

GOFAL

Great Opportunities For All to Learn



MINUTES

Llanidloes Schools' Federation Governing Body Meeting; Wednesday 18 March 2026, 6.30 pm at the secondary school

PRESENT

In person: Clare Bound, Margot Jones, Daniel Owen, Adrian Foulkes, Megan Higgs, Sally Fowler, Angela Williams, Lisa E Davies, Jordan Davies, Linda Broughall, Jamie Jones, Heather Willis

Via Teams: Lisa Ashton

IN ATTENDANCE

Richard Williams (secondary school deputy headteacher), Ruth Davies (primary school acting deputy headteacher), Nicole Jenkins (primary school acting deputy headteacher), Jane Jerman (secondary school assistant headteacher), Sue Bound (secondary school business manager), Helen Rees (clerk)

Via Teams: Huw Cripps (secondary school School Improvement Adviser)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Christoph Schultz.

Governors not present and from whom apologies had not been received by the clerk were Sarah Purdy and Karl Lewis.

The meeting was quorate, therefore business proceeded.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST/BUSINESS INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Cllr Fleur Frantz Morgans had been nominated as an LA governor and was going through the appointment process.

Nominations had been requested for the primary school parent governor vacancy with a closing date of 19 March.

4. BUSINESS OF MEETING

It was agreed to consider agenda item 7 next. Primary school staffing was identified to be discussed under 'any other business'.

7. ESTYN MONITORING VISIT, SECONDARY SCHOOL

The headteacher told governors that the whole school community was devastated by Estyn's monitoring visit report and that he was sorry that the school had been placed in special measures. The meeting would be used to go through the report in detail, explain what Estyn would require the school to do next and present a proposal regarding the leadership structure.

The headteacher shared a presentation with governors which summarised the findings for each recommendation, which were generally negative in tone and content. Governors asked for more detail on the report. Governors were told that three contextual points had been shared with Estyn. Modelled outcomes used the percentage of eFSM pupils, 8%, as a proxy indicator. However, CAT scores demonstrated the difference in starting points between rural schools and schools in leafy suburbs with the same percentage of eFSM pupils: rural schools had starting points lower than average but progress, as measured by value-added performance, could still be good. Every rural secondary school, except one, in the local authority was in a category. The exception was Crickhowell which was in an affluent leafy suburb. When value-added performance was considered, 27 subjects at Llanidloes high school were red hot. Data from pupils attending the ASD centre had not been disaggregated from the whole-school performance data. Governors asked if the headteacher had thought that Estyn inspectors would take these points into account and felt that, in future, model outcomes should be the focus rather than value-added performance. The headteacher told governors that there would be a re-set, but he felt that the approach would be hard on staff. The headteacher said that he had thought that contextual points would be taken into account as he had previously done himself as an inspector.

Governors asked if the statement of overreliance on external support referred to the School Improvement Adviser visiting school and were told that the school had used extensive external support from a variety of sources, but that Estyn had decided that this was not sustainable. However, if the school had refused external support then inspectors would have considered that the school was not engaging with the process and that this would have been negative too. Estyn would have preferred to see more middle leadership time used for providing internal support.

The deputy headteacher told governors that he was sorry for the outcome of the report and especially recommendations 2 and 3 that he had led on. He had felt that progress on recommendation 2 had been made, but it wasn't enough or fast enough. Some issues were more profound than originally thought. Estyn inspectors had found some elements of progress on feedback, but leaders now recognised that some staff had been muddled by a plethora of strategies, some of which had fizzled out before becoming embedded in practice. Governors recognised that staff would have been upset by the report but asked if concerns over the quality of teaching would be addressed and felt that a massive cultural shift was required. A governor who was also a curriculum area lead told governors that he felt humiliated and devastated by the report and apologised for his part in it. In light of the fact that inspectors had found that only two or three lessons out of every ten observed met expectations, governors asked if staff knew that they would be observed and were told that they did but not exactly when. Governors asked what resources the school had to effect change and were told that they would build up from the basics such as pedagogy and teaching and learning strategies. Governors were told that the journey out of special measures was likely to take around two years. Governors commented that staff should be supported, mentored and encouraged but there should also be accountability for capability. Ultimately a consistent, fair and formal process was necessary. It was noted that the recommended changes had not been embedded in the two years following the core inspection and that a clear strategy was needed.

The deputy headteacher summarised the findings on recommendation 3 for governors. Not all pupils in the Welsh medium stream went on to take Welsh language at GCSE. Evaluations were often overly positive and did not identify the most important areas for improvement. There were shortcomings in the coordination and leadership of skills provision in that a lack of challenge was not identified so support and provision for skills was not adapted which limited pupils' progress. The implementation of the literacy marking policy had been found to be too variable and literacy feedback was underdeveloped. Support for staff was not always sufficiently targeted and new strategies had not been embedded before the focus was changed. Governors commented that the findings highlighted how fundamental and basic the changes needed to be.

The associate senior leader (ASL) with responsibility for attendance told governors that he had taken up the role at the end of May 2026 and since this time attendance had increased from 89% to 91%. The school target was 92%. A reward-based culture had been fostered and the majority of parents supported the school. Governors were told that Estyn inspectors had only considered verified data from the previous academic year, as verified data was not available for the current year. During the course of the monitoring visit, the school had received verified data from the LA but the inspectors would only consider the core data set. Governors were reminded that Estyn had not given the school a target in their original recommendation. Governors commented that it was important to take the findings into account and progress should be carefully monitored but that it was encouraging to know that a plan was in place. Governors observed that the expected increase in attendance after Year 11 pupils had left in the summer had not been seen and asked if it was known why attendance of that cohort had been low and were told that the current Year 8 and 10 were target groups and that short-term interventions were proving effective as attendance had increased by 2.5%. The ASL told governors that he had visited other schools and researched methods of improving attendance. Comparison between tutor groups had proved effective and would be introduced in the near future. It was felt that it was important to develop a whole-school culture alongside individual approaches where necessary. It was noted that Welsh Government regulations stated that schools could only allow 15 periods of study leave for Year 11 pupils and that any periods in excess of this were marked as absence. Governors commented that if teaching was good then children would want to attend school and that if skills provision was underdeveloped then children would feel frustrated and not incentivised to attend. Governors asked if children were generally happy once in school and were told that six pupils had been absent on Monday due to anxiety. Parents were not covering for this by saying that their children were ill, so support plans could be put in place. Office staff were the first point of contact for parents, so extensive training had been provided for them.

Huw Cripps told governors that it was important for the school to take ownership of the report and that the local authority would continue to provide support. Estyn inspectors would expect to see leaders acting on this support and evidence that they were continually driving forward progress. In terms of data analysis, Mr Cripps told governors that the core data set had been in use for some time, although some staff had continued to use value-added data which could result in false benchmarking against other schools. It was appreciated that there were some contextual points, but Llanidloes was in the top 10% of affluent areas. The report had highlighted that in nearly half of all lessons observed, teaching was not good enough. Expectations should be higher and greater leadership, rigour of quality assurance and accountability were required. Mr Cripps had noted that the strap line on a transition video on the school website was 'come join the fun', and that, while it was important that children enjoyed school, it was not fair to them if half of all lessons were not good. It was good that new structures were in place to support an increase in attendance and if efforts continued then the outcome should be positive. Mr Cripps told governors that action on many of the findings would require increased leadership at all levels. The journey out of special measures would not be easy; relationships would be tested and honesty required. Leaders would have to question when standards were not up to expectations; this would apply to everyone, all the time and could not be optional.

Governors asked how the transition would be managed and were told by the headteacher that the detail would be written into the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) which was the responsibility of the governing body but would be drawn up by the senior leadership team (SLT). The PIAP had to be submitted to Estyn for scrutiny by 24 April. Estyn inspectors would visit the school, usually every 4-6 months, and following each visit a report would be sent to the school. Mr Cripps had collected examples of the process and PIAPs. It was proposed that the governing body form a PIAP committee, for the exclusive purpose of overseeing the PIAP, as this had been found to be effective at other schools. Governors agreed the proposal and Margot Jones, Clare Bound, Linda Broughall, Adrian Foulkes and Sally Fowler were appointed to the committee. The committee would meet every half term, with the first meeting on Monday 20 April at 5.00 pm via Teams. The curriculum and strategic planning committee would continue to meet termly with an exclusive focus on the primary school.

The headteacher told governors that there were additional implications for schools requiring special measures in that they could not appoint newly qualified teachers without seeking advice from Estyn and must include a statement on progress made in implementing the PIAP in every governors' annual report to parents. It was agreed

that the whole community, including pupils, should feel ownership of the PIAP. Governors were told that the whole monitoring report had already been discussed at a staff meeting.

Huw Cripps left the meeting

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meetings of the governing body held on 7 January and 4 February were confirmed and would be filed in the schools' file.

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

There were no matters arising.

8. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT, SECONDARY SCHOOL

As discussed at item 7.

9. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT, PRIMARY SCHOOL

The headteacher asked if governors had any questions about her report. Governors had noted the lack of parental engagement with internet safety workshops and asked if they could help with this. The headteacher told governors that last year's workshops were attended by just one family. Some parents didn't realise the issues that could arise from children using the internet and the safeguards that were available, so problems were addressed on an individual basis as they arose. Internet safety had been added into the 'meet the teacher' event, and there had been a display with a teacher available to give advice at progress meetings. Although it was recognised that children could feel excluded if they were not online there were major concerns, for example, parents being unaware that their six-year-old child was chatting to strangers online. Following the 'meet the teacher' event, a small group of parents had decided together that their children would not have devices to try and reduce the peer pressure that they felt.

Governors commented that progress on priority 2, to improve pupils' writing skills in English, showed that some areas of writing had been addressed, but not all. The headteacher told governors that the current focus was on writing at length. The Helen Bowen writing scheme which addressed all genres was used throughout the school, together with Big Write which aimed to make writing at length exciting and engaging. Governors were told that initially the school's development of the Curriculum for Wales had given staff freedom to make their own interpretations, but now a more layered approach was being put in place to ensure coverage of all aspects in all classes. The SIA had looked at a selection of books and noted improvements.

10. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The meeting of the Staffing and Finance Committee on 21 January had already been reported to the governing body.

11. CROCS, EARLY YEARS PROVISION

The headteacher and chair had met onsite with Mariane Evans (LA transformation team), Sarah Stanton (LA project delivery officer), Nia Evans (Crocs treasurer) and Emma Macken (Crocs staff) on 6 March. The chair told governors that the school had initially been asked not to use the bottom classroom while Flying Start sessions were in the building as they needed to go through the classroom to access the toilets. It had been agreed that the LA would fund the provision of direct access to the toilets for Flying Start. Plans had not yet been received, but a corner of the classroom would be partitioned off to provide an entrance lobby. It had also been agreed that Flying Start would stop using the kitchen and the school could resume full-time use of the classroom with immediate effect. It was hoped that the works would take place during the summer holiday. Governors agreed that Flying Start was a valuable provision that encouraged families on to the school site.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The governor with responsibility for health and safety said that secondary school PE staff had raised a concern that the gates by the gym were locked and they would therefore be unable to re-access the school during a lockdown. The business manager told governors that all PE staff had been given keys to the gate but that she would investigate any concerns.

Governors were told that a member of the secondary school staff had raised concerns over ventilation in the DT workshop. The business manager told governors that the issue was the responsibility of the local authority and they were planning remedial work. An air quality testing kit had been provided.

Governors asked for a progress report on lighting for the secondary school visitors' car park and were told that a work order had been issued but that the company did not have capacity to carry out the work at present.

Governors were told that the primary school health and safety audit had been carried out by Terry Hampton, LA Health and Safety Adviser. The premises had been found to be compliant, with minor concerns over car park markings and a pothole in the parents' car park.

13. SAFEGUARDING

Both schools' annual safeguarding audit updates had been circulated to governors. Governors approved the audit updates.

14. GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT

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

It was noted that the date of the next staffing and finance committee meeting had been changed to 22 April. Nancy Owen, LA Finance Manager, would be in attendance.

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

There were no such items.

17. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

It was resolved according to The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005, Section 48 that item 16 be minuted as confidential.

18. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Governors were reminded to notify any such items to the clerk at least two weeks before the meeting date.

19. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Full governing body

Wednesday 29 April 2026 (budget approval 2026-27)

Wednesday 1 July 2026

Primary school curriculum and strategic planning committee

Wednesday 17 June 2026

Secondary school PIAP committee

Monday 20 April

Staffing and finance committee

Wednesday 22 April 2026 (budget approval 2026-27; first week of term)

Jordan Davies, Jamie Jones, Heather Willis, Lisa E Davies, Richard Williams, Nicole Jenkins, Ruth Davies, Jane Jerman and Sue Bound left the meeting

Huw Cripps joined the meeting

16. 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 this item be minuted as confidential.