

## **Minutes of the meeting of the Ceredigion Schools Admissions Forum held remotely via Teams on Thursday, 22 May 2025**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Wyn Thomas (Chair), Cabinet Member for Schools, Lifelong Learning and Skills; Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation; Councillor Chris James, Chair of the Learning Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee; Enid Brophy, Head Teacher: Ysgol Gynradd Gatholig Padarn Sant; Lee Burrows, Head Teacher: Ysgol Cenarth a Llechryd; Carol Davies, Head Teacher: Ysgol Dyffryn Cledlyn; Peter Leggett, Head Teacher: Ysgol Gynradd Rhydypennau and Dorian Pugh, Head Teacher: Ysgol Henry Richard.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Elen James, Chief Education Officer and Corporate Lead Officer: Schools, Lifelong Learning and Culture; Gwion Dafydd, Corporate Manager: Accountability and Progress; Cheryl Evans, School Admission Officer and Neris Morgans, Democratic Services Officer.

(4.00pm – 4.40pm)

### **1. Apologies**

Peter Leggett, Head Teacher: Ysgol Gynradd Rhydypennau apologised for joining the meeting late.

### **2. Disclosure of personal interest**

There were no disclosures of personal interests.

### **3. To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 December 2024**

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2024 as a correct record.

### **4. Matters arising from the Minutes**

None.

### **5. Admissions Policy 2026-2027**

Consideration was given to the latest version of the policy due to be presented to the Cabinet on 3 June 2025.

Councillor Bryan Davies noted that a letter in his name had been sent to Welsh Government on home education and the need for Officers to be allowed access to households.

The School Admission Officer explained that Officers did not have many rights to access households at present, but hopefully, this would change in the future.

Following a question by Councillor Bryan Davies related to Llanarth Primary School's capacity once local housing developments had been completed, the School Admission Officer noted it was difficult to foresee the number of young families moving to any new housing development, but the situation would be monitored accordingly.

In response to concerns raised by Dorian Pugh, Head Teacher: Ysgol Henry Richard related to the school not being recognised as one school in terms of capacity as it was categorised as primary and secondary, the School Admissions Officer clarified WG had not published guidelines for 3-16 schools.

The Corporate Manager: Accountability and Progress explained that he planned to visit Ysgol Henry Richard following the half-term break, to undertake a review of the use of rooms in the school and to update the capacity calculations if required.

It was **AGREED** to note the information.

#### **6. Year 7 Numbers - September 2025**

The School Admission Officer explained that data for September 2025 had been circulated for information. Five pupils were yet to apply for a space, but it was known which schools they would attend. Other than this, there was not much change anticipated.

It was **AGREED** to note the information.

#### **7. Reception Year Numbers – September 2025 & 2026**

The School Admission Officer reported that there had not been many issues with the admission of reception-aged pupils for 2025 and numbers were nearly final. The admission for 2026 was also in progress. Generally, most schools were under their admission number. In instances where the number exceeded this, consideration would be given to the school's overall pupil numbers along with a discussion with the Head Teacher on whether they would be happy to accept additional pupils.

The Corporate Manager: Accountability and Progress noted that Ceredigion's admissions deadline closed before Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. From the service's understanding, around 150 nursery-aged children were yet to apply for reception for 2026. It was noted that many parents/ guardians were confused with the process and thought having a place in nursery automatically led to a place in reception, however, this was not the case. He added that Penparc Primary School's capacity had decreased due to the way the school used the site. The next 2 years were large, however, there was capacity and potential to utilize larger classrooms.

In response to the Chair's suggestion that more pupils were moving to year 7 than the number starting in reception, the Corporate Manager: Accountability and Progress clarified that this was correct. He explained that the birth rate had decreased, therefore it was key to monitor the situation to ensure any changes could be included in future projections.

It was **AGREED** to note the information.

## **8. Mid-Year Admission Appeals 2025-2026**

The School Admission Officer reported that there had been no mid-year Admission Appeals to date since the meeting held in December 2024.

Enid Brophy, Head Teacher: Ysgol Gynradd Gatholig Padarn Sant explained there was possibly an appeal on the way with Padarn Sant.

It was **AGREED** to note the information.

## **9. Capacity Update**

The Corporate Manager: Accountability and Progress stated this was a new item on the agenda. An overview of the local authority's schools' capacity was provided. Several factors accounted for the changes in capacity such as room usage and expansion.

School capacity should be reviewed annually, but due to a small team, this was not possible and schools that were over-capacity or had changed the way the site was used were being reviewed first. When determining the capacity, the local authority had to follow a statutory document by Welsh Government. Any change in capacity would be discussed with the Head Teachers and there was an appeals process in place should a school's governing body not agree with the capacity set. As mentioned previously, he planned to visit Ysgol Henry Richard following the half-term break.

In response to a question by Peter Leggett: Head Teacher, Ysgol Gynradd Rhydypennau it was noted that the capacity for reception and nursery were separate. He queried what would happen if the school had met their admission number before the Easter intake.

The School Admission Officer stated if parents/ guardians applied by the deadline, it was fair for all and any issues could be addressed. It was acknowledged that some parents/ guardians only remembered a few weeks before their child was due to start at reception. There were challenges at times with schools' capacity as the local authority's schools had three intakes a year, as opposed to one intake as was the case in many of the other local authorities.

The Corporate Manager: Accountability and Progress added that Ceredigion had agreed to three intakes to support families due to the lack of childcare and nursery provision. He stated it would be a simpler process for families and Officers if there was only one intake in place, but the advantages of having the pupils start school earlier would be lost.

Peter Leggett: Head Teacher, Ysgol Gynradd Rhydypennau stated it was worthwhile for pupils to start earlier as it allowed them to familiarise themselves with the school.

Enid Brophy, Head Teacher: Ysgol Gynradd Gatholig Padarn Sant suggested different colour forms for nursery and reception applications.

The School Admission Officer explained that parents/ guardians were required to complete separate forms to apply for nursery and reception, however, when applying for nursery, there was a section at the end of the form that asked whether a reception application was required the following year. Generally, this process worked well and prevented duplication for parents/ guardians, but for it to work, a nursery application had to be completed first.

Peter Leggett: Head Teacher, Ysgol Gynradd Rhydypennau stated this process worked well as parents/ guardians would often forget to apply for reception.

#### **10. Any Other Business**

The Chair and the Corporate Lead Officer: Schools, Lifelong Learning thanked all for their attendance.

The Corporate Manager: Accountability and Progress explained that the local authority was due to send data on pupil projections to Welsh Government in September/October. He mentioned that the plan is for each school to receive a report specific to their school which could be shared with the school's governing body in order to be more transparent about pupil projections in future. Historically, the pupil projections model had been around 98-99% accurate at county level.

#### **11. Date of next meeting**

Date of next meeting to be circulated in due course.