

**Minutes of the meeting of the Ceredigion Schools Admissions Forum
held remotely via ZOOM on Thursday, 9 May 2024**

PRESENT: Councillor Wyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Schools, Lifelong Learning and Skills; Councillor Endaf Edwards, Chair of Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee; Enid Brophy, Head Teacher: Ysgol Gynradd Gatholig Padarn Sant; Lee Burrows, Head Teacher: Ysgol Cenarth & Llechryd; Peter Leggett, Head Teacher, Ysgol Gynradd Rhydypennau; Carys Morgan, Head Teacher: Ysgol Bro Pedr and Dorian Pugh, Head Teacher: Ysgol Henry Richard.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Elen James, Chief Education Officer and Corporate Lead Officer: Lifelong Learning; Clive Williams, Corporate Lead Officer: Schools; Duncan Hall, Corporate Lead Officer: Finance and Procurement; Gwion Dafydd, Corporate Manager: Accountability and Progress; Cheryl Evans, School Admission Officer; Carys Fowles, Assistant Accountant and Neris Morgans, Democratic Services Officer.

(4.00pm – 4.26pm)

1. Apologies

- i. Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation apologised for his inability to attend the meeting due to other Council commitments.
- ii. Carol Davies, Head Teacher, Ysgol Dyffryn Cledlyn; Mair Hughes, Head Teacher: Ysgol Penglais; Catryn Lawrence, Head Teacher: Ysgol Penrhyncoch & Penllwyn and Owain Jones, Head Teacher: Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

2. Disclosure of personal interest

There were no disclosures of personal interests.

3. To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 July 2022

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2022 as a correct record.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

None.

5. Information for Parents Document

The Corporate Manager: Accountability and Progress noted that the document was available online and was updated as required by the Schools Admission Officer.

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

6. Admissions Policy 2025-2026

Consideration was given to the latest version of the policy, which was due to be presented to the Cabinet on 14 May 2024. It was noted that the

School admission and capacity numbers included at the end of the document were revised as and when required.

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

7. Year 7 Numbers - September 2023 & 2024

The Corporate Manager: Accountability and Progress explained that data for 2023 and 2024 had been circulated for information. Although a few of the secondary schools were close to the admission number, there continued to be capacity in all.

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

8. Reception Year Numbers – September 2023 & 2024

The Corporate Manager: Accountability and Progress reported that there had not been many issues with the admission of reception-aged pupils. Data indicated that Aberaeron Primary School would have a high number of admissions in September 2025 therefore some applications may have to be refused. In other primary schools where the number of pupils accepted was above the admission number, no pupils had been refused a place as the years above had fewer pupils. Before any pupil was refused a place, Officers would contact the Head Teacher of the relevant school to query whether there was anything that could be changed internally within the school to enable the pupil to be accepted.

Cardigan Primary School had experienced a significant reduction in the number of reception pupils accepted from around 60 annually to 30 in 2024. Ysgol Gymraeg Aberystwyth had a smaller intake too, partly due to a reduced birth rate, which has had a county-wide impact. The Ceredigion birth rate in 2022 had been under 500 for the first time, compared to over 600 in the past. It was noted that including the birth rates over the years within the internal projections model has meant that projected pupil numbers have been pretty accurate.

It was reported that Plascrug Primary School were close to capacity and several appeals had been held in recent years due to the high demand. All reception-aged children had been accepted to the school, however, some pupils who had moved to the area had been refused a place due to other years being full. Following the introduction of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) in 5 schools including Plascrug, the demand could change as all schools would offer the same language provision.

Following a question by Councillor Endaf Edwards, it was noted that the lower half of Cenarth Primary School was fairly full and the number of reception-aged children accepted had been close to the admission number, however, there was some capacity in the upper half of the school.

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

9. Mid-Year Admission Appeals 2022-2023 & 2023-2024

Information related to the Mid-year Admission Appeals 2022–2023 was provided. During this period, from a total of 9 appeals held (Aberaeron x1, Ciliau Parc x3, Dyffryn Cledlyn x1, Plascrug x1, Rhydypennau x2 and T.Llew Jones x1), all pupils had been awarded a place at their preferred school. A total of 13 appeals (Aberaeron x4, Ciliau Parc x1, Felinfach x3, Plascrug x3, T.Llew Jones x2) had been held in 2023-2024 to date. The LA had lost all except for 2 appeals related to Aberaeron, where the children had subsequently been awarded places in nearby schools.

The Corporate Lead Officer: Lifelong Learning queried whether the number of admission appeals had increased over the years, as this had been the case in the number of school transport related appeals received.

The School Admission Officer explained that the number of appeals had increased very slightly, possibly as more parents were ready to appeal the decision as opposed to simply being placed on the waiting list. Several factors impacted the admissions process, such as the number of people moving into the area and large housing developments. The latter was difficult to assess as the demographic of newly built homes can never be predicted.

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

10. Any Other Business

It was noted that all children who were due to start at Ysgol Dyffryn Aeron had received a letter from the School Admission Officer to offer them a place at the new school. In addition, all pupils currently at the three primary schools that would close had been offered a place at the new school as well. Although the new school would not officially open until January 2025, the school (which had a capacity of 210 and admission number of 30) would be available online as an option following the half-term break.

11. Date of next meeting

Date of next meeting to be circulated in due course.