



**Academi Genedlaethol ar gyfer
Arweinyddiaeth Addysgol Cymru
National Academy for
Educational Leadership Wales**

Minutes/Action Notes from Board Meeting 30th January 2024

In Attendance: Dr Sue Davies (SD) (Chair)
Tegwen Ellis (TE) (Chief Executive)
Martin Price (MP)
John Graystone (JG)
Dr Debbie Nash (DN)
Katie Phillips (KPH)
Yusuf Ibrahim (YI)
Paul Marshall (PM)
Meleri Light (ML) (Joined at 10:30am)
Dr Chris Lewis (CL) (Joined at 1:15pm)
Gaynor Ace (GA) (Secretariat)

1. Welcome, confirmation of minutes and actions from previous meeting

SD opened the session and welcomed everyone to today's face to face Board meeting. Apologies had been received from Mike James (MJ).

SD noted that there would not be a report from the Audit and Risk Assurance committee today as the meeting in January had been postponed to 1st March.

There were no conflicts of interest and no gifts to be reported.

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

SD referred to the Action Log:

Action 228: regarding the endorsement programme would be deferred until MJ's return.

Action 229: Mark Isherwood had been looking at various awards schemes and had compiled a list for TE's consideration. PM commented that sometimes even the very process of applying can be a useful exercise in itself.

SD congratulated the team on the very successful Well-being conference which was held online. TE was also congratulated on becoming an honorary national affiliate of the Centre for International Research into Leadership in Education (CIRLE) at Cardiff Metropolitan University. As well as enhancing the profile of the organisation this should afford TE more opportunities to work in the international space.

2. Finance and HR Committee Report

MP provided an overview of matters discussed at the Finance and HR committee meeting on 18th January. There were no staffing issues and sickness absence did not cause any concern. The hybrid working model continues to be a success and there had been more opportunities for face to face working. It had been decided to extend the lease on the Uned for another 12 months. Some interesting discussions had taken place around the anti-racism work within the Leadership Academy.

The budget is on track for most areas with some underspends which will be reconciled by the end of March. KP is confident that the spend will be within the 2% carry over at the year end.

Meleri Light (ML), Head of Welsh, had given a presentation on the new Welsh Language policy which the committee had praised as very clear and concise. The committee will be recommending this policy to the Board for sign off in item 3 of the agenda.

JG was pleased to hear that a standstill budget had been confirmed for 2024/25 financial year. This was deemed the best outcome in the current economic climate. DN queried whether the potential political changes could impact the Leadership Academy. TE highlighted the positive feedback received from the Director of Education and the Minister for Education and Welsh Language, and pointed out the growing number of projects in progress. TE and SD felt that the value of the Leadership Academy's work was receiving growing recognition and were positive about the way forward.

PM outlined concerns regarding the recruitment of PGCE students in Wales – whereas primary school numbers were reasonable, secondary numbers were quite low. PM appreciated that this was part of a bigger systemic piece on leadership. TE highlighted the importance of promoting careers in education at every opportunity to encourage young people to enter the profession and aspire to leadership roles. JG commented on how there had been a lot of negative publicity of late around industrial action and pupil behaviour which needs to be addressed with positive promotional campaigns. TE will continue to invite the Minister to future conferences. SD suggested inviting David Richards from PBU to a future Board meeting.

SD thanked MP for his summary which had sparked some useful discussions.

3. Welsh in Education

ML gave a presentation to the Board on Welsh in Education, beginning with the new Welsh Language policy for the Leadership Academy and the Welsh language standards. Although the Leadership Academy hasn't received a compliance notice as yet it was deemed good practice to carry out an audit in readiness. The following areas have been considered: service delivery, policy making, operational, promotional and record keeping.

With regards to record keeping, the number of complaints received regarding the Welsh language has been noted. It has been decided to adopt the 'one third' policy of language preference after speaking to other similar organisations. This means that if more than one third of the meeting attendees wish to contribute through the medium in Welsh, translation services will be provided. The Leadership Academy's database has been updated with language preferences for key stakeholder groups and practical guidance regarding correspondence is also being prepared for staff and Associates. Promotional activities include the celebration of cultural days like St David's Day. ML has also introduced an informal Welsh speaking session on Thursdays called Paned a Sgwrs. Board members would be welcome to join in; ML will circulate a link.

ML spoke of the 10 year Welsh in Education plan involving different stakeholders including the Leadership Academy. This aim is to ensure that Welsh is at the heart of learning in the curriculum. It is planned to increase the number of Welsh speakers and practitioners in schools and equip all leaders with the skills to develop Welsh. ML was positive regarding the current programme which aims to encourage teachers to return to Wales. The new scheme targets teachers in their first 5 years of teaching.

ML referred to innovation funding given to the Regional Consortia prior to the pandemic to strengthen the provision of Welsh. This started off as a face to face programme focusing on promoting Welsh identity and Welsh culture. Since then this programme has come forward for endorsement and it is hoped will become a national model for supporting English medium schools in promoting the Welsh language.

ML referred to Cohort 2's commission and the resulting toolkit for self-evaluation of Welsh provision which is currently being piloted in seven schools. The questions look at leadership, equity and the curriculum, and the toolkit should be utilised alongside the national resource. ML has a meeting with schools next week to discuss initial feedback and will then consider the impact and barriers to implementation.

ML outlined the requirements of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs) which every local authority will need to produce. One requirement will be the E-Ysgol project which ensures that revision provision reaches rural schools through a combination of blended learning and online revision sessions.

ML listed the partnerships entered into since September with organisations such as the National Centre for Learning Welsh, CYDAG, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and Estyn. There is also a sabbatical scheme where teachers come out of school for 3 months to learn Welsh then return to their teaching posts.

ML shared her performance, improvement and development enquiry with the board which asks the question to what extent does a Welsh medium school setting create confident Welsh speakers and also the impact of leadership in these schools. ML plans to work closely with a Welsh medium school, an English medium school and a dual language school to consider these issues.

The Leadership Academy and the stakeholder reference group responded to the white paper consultation for the Welsh Language Education Bill in June 2023, highlighting some concerns around special schools and also categorisation. The bill seeks to establish and implement a single continuum of Welsh language skills so that learners, teachers and parents have a common understanding of the journey towards learning Welsh and the expected outcomes. It was recognised that the target for every pupil to be at B2 level in Welsh was very ambitious.

JG requested sight of the Leadership Academy's response to the consultation. ML will circulate to Board members. JG also queried the availability of free Welsh classes. ML confirmed that the National Centre has introduced some free provision and Cymraeg Gwaith provide free lessons for 16-25 year olds. ML will check out whether there are any other free learning opportunities. PM's daughter is currently learning Welsh via Duo Lingo and wondered whether there is any way of connecting Welsh learners outside of Wales. ML confirmed that the Minister has included language use outside of Wales in his report on Cymraeg 2050.

SD commented that mentoring seemed to feature very highly in plans and also expressed some concern that we were losing Welsh speakers to roles outside of Wales. ML agreed but also pointed out the need to provide clarity when briefing NQTs and not to paint too glossy a picture.

YI had found the presentation and subsequent discussions very interesting. As the policy is primarily aimed at schools, he queried whether there were any plans to look at this from a FE perspective and highlighted the mentoring and transference of skills issue. ML replied that a national plan for Welsh language skills framework had been identified by employers as the way forward. ML agreed that there was definitely work to do with the FE and youth sector and it was hoped to get these sectors involved in the forthcoming conference in Llandudno on May 1st.

JG felt that the proposed bill is still too schools focused and should have a much wider more ambitious long term approach. ML stated that this view was also held by the stakeholder group.

YI spoke of the tendencies to internalise Welsh if working for an English media employer. TE agreed and highlighted the effect of friendship groups and life choices made in promoting the use of Welsh. TE also referred to the difficulties of studying/working in science or research through the medium of Welsh as most research would have been published in English. On the plus side, Welsh media has exploded over the past few years and there are a lot more opportunities for Welsh speakers to work in public sector bodies.

SD thanked ML for a very interesting presentation that had covered a range of topics and had inspired some very useful and worthwhile discussion points. ML will circulate slides to Board members as requested.

The Board agreed to sign off and adopt the new Welsh Language policy.

4. Chief Executive Report against the Corporate Plan

TE began by stating that the new quarterly programme of Board meetings aligns more closely with WG monitoring which avoids duplication of reporting. TE then outlined progress through the work stream areas as follows:

1.1 Quality Assurance – the endorsement process continues to attract providers to bring their provision forward.. Provision has successfully been endorsed through the fast track process.

An open call is still in place and the Leadership Academy is aware that there is still a lot of leadership provision that is not coming forward for endorsement, mostly from private providers. WG are becoming more receptive to the benefits of endorsement and are setting up a similar process for non-leadership provision. It is therefore hoped that there may be a directive to schools to only use endorsed provision going forward.

DN asked whether provisions that don't get endorsed generally resubmit? TE thought resubmission percentages were quite high but will ask Mark Isherwood to confirm. TE confirmed that Mark's team works closely with providers giving them advice, ensuring that they do re-submit and steering them down the innovation route where appropriate.

In response to a query from JG, TE confirmed that endorsement could be removed from providers if they fail to deliver. There is a rigorous monitoring system in place and follow up recommendations to ensure standards are maintained.

1.2 Innovation –TE explained that the pot of money allocated to innovation funding in the budget provides the only space for flexibility. This 'cushion' should prove very useful in supporting Associates in funding projects as the Associate Federation grows.

1.3 System Leadership – Learning Experience 3 for cohort 6 is taking place tomorrow where they will be presented with their commission topics. For the first time the cohort will co-construct their question(s) with the Leadership Academy. The

topics chosen are Anti-Racism, as it is a national target to become an anti-racist nation by 2030 and Self Evaluation, as this area has been highlighted in Estyn Annual report as an area of concern.

Cohort 5 are working on their commissions and are on track to present their outputs for scrutiny in April. The Associate Federation are now working in 3 groups on 3 separate projects looking at the following areas: parental protocols, well-being and self-improving schools. PM queried whether the parental protocol project could prove controversial. TE highlighted issues faced by schools in this area which have been exacerbated following the pandemic. TE now sits on the attendance task force where campaigns targeted at parents are discussed to ensure children attend school. The Associate Federation will engage with WG during their projects and the projects will be overseen by TE

1.4 Leadership Development – TE outlined some recent work with the voluntary youth sector where consultant, Emma Chivers has made good progress in engaging with partners. The Leadership conference (face to face) attracted 161 delegates with 45 of these being new attendees. TE was pleased to note that this event generated 34 new subscribers to the newsletter. There had been good representation from all Local Authorities including those in North Wales. The school sector had the highest representation followed by the middle tier, PCET and the youth work sector.

The 4th online wellbeing conference had 115 attendees and it was noted that people dipped into and out of this during the day. Again there was good representation from all sectors with schools first then the middle tier. There were also attendees from HEIs, PCET, the youth work sector and Local Authorities. This conference had representation from all Local Authorities plus delegates from Ireland (as part of the Tri-Nations Consortia). Nia Miles would like to run this conference on a face to face basis in the future which would be good for well-being.

JG had attended both conferences and had enjoyed the face to face format. JG queried whether the Leadership Academy had to pay for attendees who cancel. TE confirmed that they generally booked a few less places in case of cancellations and were sometimes able to fill last minute places from waiting lists.

2.1 Resources – ML had already spoken about Welsh resources and all agreed that she was doing a brilliant job. SD reflected that ML was already doing much more than had been projected and it was hoped that funding for this post would continue beyond the 2 year period.

A lot of work had been carried out around the pedagogy resource. This work was being led by a secondee who was working pan Wales. Professor Ken Jones is delivering the next Leadership Unlocked event scheduled for March 7th.

2.2 Insight – The Ministerial Advisory Group meets monthly with a face to face meeting scheduled for March. It has been advised to cancel this meeting however due to the possibility of a new Minister being appointed so the face to face meeting will move to May.

Professor Carol Campbell has completed the work on reflective practice for leaders and this has been commissioned in partnership with EWC. The paper hasn't been translated as yet due to some changes requested by EWC. Consideration will then need to be given as to how best to disseminate this paper. The youth work insight piece is on track to be completed.

TE was pleased to note that Cohort 3's ALN commission is now being referenced in other publications. In response to a request from Associates as to how their commissions influence policy, Kevin Palmer had gone through the commissions and outlined the connections.

2.3 Well-being – The Well-being conference has been detailed in 1.4 above. Well-being working and consultative groups continue to meet regularly.

Two papers have been submitted to Belmas and both have been accepted: Well-being and Recruitment and Retention. Nia Miles will lead on the well-being paper assisted by one of the Associates.

2.4 Strategic Workforce Planning – TE and CL will be leading on the recruitment and retention paper at BELMAS . This will be more widely disseminated after the NIESR report has been presented to WG.

3.1 Effective Governance – The Board's training plan has commenced with today's session on Welsh in Education and the next planned session will look at the Youth Work Sector led by Emma Chivers at the April meeting.

TE was very pleased at YI's appointment as Chair of the Anti-Racism steering group and TE will give a presentation at the next meeting on the work carried out to date. TE stressed the importance of having a clear baseline to map the organisation's progress.

3.2 Executive Function – The Board was happy to endorse the new Welsh Language policy as presented by ML today. TE confirmed that the Leadership Academy has gained the IASME Level 1 certification – this follows on from Cyber Essentials plus and is a requirement of the framework agreement with WG.

Internal audits focused on GDPR and data assurance and TE was pleased to note that the Leadership Academy had received 'reasonable assurance' from both audits. All new team members have completed mental health and first aid training. Management meetings are held regularly and review risk on a regular basis. Deep dives are now being delivered during operational team meetings.

3.3 Comms and Marketing –Charlotte Thomas, Marketing Manager, provides regular digital communication statistics which demonstrates that engagement is increasing month on month. Website content will need to be expanded to ensure all the recent work on Welsh in Education and Anti-racism is included.

3.4 Stakeholders and Partnerships – Partnership engagement with the regional consortia continues. TE has been visiting schools and talking to Headteachers which has been a very valuable exercise.

The Stakeholder Group meeting in December was cancelled due to other priorities and this meeting has been arranged for February. TE stressed the importance of fully involving this group and getting a wide range of representation across the sectors. TE also spoke of the value of sitting on external reference groups such as the attendance task force group and community focused schools steering group. The Leadership Academy still engages with school governors although this is less prominent as the activity outlined in the remit has been achieved. It was acknowledged that a lot more could be done with governors if there was capacity. JG was in agreement and pointed out that governors have an important role in supporting schools as well as scrutinising.

TE commented on the report in general, pointing out that it was getting more difficult to separate individual work streams. It might therefore be a better approach going forwards to look at work under broader headings. Consideration will be given as to how to revamp the corporate plan to make it more strategic.

SD thanked TE for a very comprehensive report as always and was very impressed with the hard work carried out so effectively by TE and her team.

5. National Leadership Survey

CL gave a presentation on the 1st biennial leadership survey of the education workforce. This had been carried out in conjunction with OB3 Consultancy. Its aim was to find out what the data set looks like and to ascertain in detail how leaders view the Leadership Academy and gather opinions on educational leadership themes in general.

CL detailed the two types of audiences that have an interest in the Leadership Academy. The first being the policy audience, a known number of people. The practitioner audience was much wider and many of them are not known to the Leadership Academy.

The survey had received 451 responses with a breakdown of sectors as follows:

Schools – 63%

Post 16 – 24%

Youth work – 11%

Governors only – 2%.

Responses were mostly from senior leaders although there were some from middle leaders. 51% of responses were from Head Teachers and there had been at least 1 response from each LA.

Respondents were asked what they think of the Leadership Academy with half saying that they understood the purpose very well or fairly well. A small number provided comments with some negative comments referring to the Leadership Academy being elitist or a 'talking shop'. 60% of responses attached at least some value to the Leadership Academy's work.

Half the respondents had attended online events and the large majority deemed these useful or very useful. 40% had engaged with one or more publications. When questioned on the likelihood of turning to the Leadership Academy for endorsed provision, 40% had any awareness of this and 32% had used it.

YI found this a fantastic piece of work and asked whether any follow up discussions would be held. CL agreed that it would be useful to hold focus group sessions to discuss some of the points made. YI also suggested having a 4 point scale for future surveys as people generally opt for the middle ground in responses .

CL summarised by saying that those respondents who have participated in any events run by the Leadership Academy seem to have a good understanding and also appreciated the value. The difficulty seems to be in extending the reach without having a 'retail' offer.

PM spoke of the challenge in interpreting the data and deciding what good looks like. Even with some depressing statistics, PM was still pleased to see generally a majority of good scores.

MP queried whether headteachers respondents were primarily from the primary or secondary sectors as secondary heads seem to talk to each other more whereas primary heads can feel more isolated. TE agreed that rural schools can be difficult to reach and engage with. CL agreed that it might be useful to pinpoint where respondents were from to better understand the picture.

JG found this a very honest survey and would like to look closer at the critical comments. JG suggested including a link in future surveys for people to be contacted if they were willing to discuss further.

TE believed engagement would improve if people were made accountable for their own PL and if the Leadership Academy were able to offer professional leadership grants. SD queried the role of school improvement officers in promoting the Leadership Academy.

MP suggested including a couple of similar questions in other surveys such as the ALN survey which had received more responses.

SD thanked CL for his presentation which had provided a useful starting point in understanding the wider audience. It was intended to repeat this exercise in the autumn of 2025/2026. It was agreed that results would not be shared wider for now but will form part of internal discussions in how the Leadership Academy's work can be further promoted.

6. Date of next meeting, future agenda items and close

The next Board meeting will be held face to face on Friday April 26th – location to be advised.

Future agenda items will include: presentation on the recruitment and retention report, an update on the anti-racism work, a presentation from the Public Bodies

Unit, information on the framework and possibly an Associate to update on their work.

SD thanked everyone for their participation in today's meeting and closed the meeting at 2.45pm.

Action Log

No.		Owner	Deadline	Status
228	Discuss endorsement programme	TE/MI/Directors	April 2024	
229	Consider applying for an award for Associate programme	TE and Team	April 2024	Completed
233	Circulate White Paper responses and also a link to Paned a Sgwrs	ML	February 2024	
234	Check with MI on endorsement resubmission percentages	TE	February 2024	
235	Find out details on free Welsh language courses	ML	February 2024	