

WELSHPOOL HIGH SCHOOL



GOVERNORS' REPORT TO PARENTS

**FOR ACADEMIC YEAR
2024 - 2025**

Message from the Chair of Governors – October 2025

The 2024/25 Governing Body report has not been the easiest I have written. The last academic year saw the school being placed in special measures by Estyn. They have recommended 5 key areas for improvement; these can be found on page 6 of this report.

As the Chair of the Governing Body, I know there are areas that WHS does need to improve, and the Governing Body is working hard with the High School and PCC to achieve that impact.

The Governing Body asks all parents and pupils not to let these recommendations distract from the important work that has already been achieved to create a strong foundation. The summary correctly shows that the whole school is very good at the following:

- Creating a caring and supportive environment
- It has a strong safeguarding culture
- There are strong arrangements for Year 7 transition from the Primary schools into WHS.

Without this safe, secure, environment, staff would not be in such a strong position to improve by implementing the recommendations.

One of the recommendations focuses on improving pupil absenteeism. This was already being addressed well before the inspection. The figures for the end of last academic year and the first week of this year indicate that measures in place are showing improvement in attendance.

In 2024/2025 Years 12 & 13 showed increased numbers of young people deciding to choose WHS to continue their education, which is excellent. However, the challenges that this brings, is that not all pupils choose to undertake subjects, or the vocational route, to which they would be best suited.

There are many elements of the 2025 examination results that can be celebrated, not least the increase in the overall performance of pupils in their GCSE examinations, and especially the significant improvements shown by pupils that are in receipt of Free School Meals.

Once again, we have a significant increase in pupils joining the school in Year 7, as word spreads regarding the positive ethos that exists in the school.

As a Governing Body, our priorities are the School Development Plan and responding to the recommendations in the Estyn Report.

Away from the day-to-day school schedule we will continue our role in monitoring and challenging PCC Schools Improvement Programme to ensure the best outcomes for our pupils.

We will continue, as we have for many years, to challenge PCC on its unfair funding policies that see WHS receive 10 to 30% less funding for its pupils compared to other schools in Powys.

We believe that the Governing Body's voluntary input to WHS, and the communities served can only be enhanced through the support of pupils, parents, carers and, of course, the staff and the wider community. We look forward to an exciting future as we work together to achieve the aspirations set out in the School Development Plan, for the benefit of all learners who choose WHS.

THE GOVERNING BODY – September 2025

Who we are:

[Term of Office expiry dates are shown after each name]

Local Authority Governors:

Cllr Jeremy Brignell-Thorp – 08.02.27

Cllr Graham Breeze – 14.02.26

Mrs Yvonne Naylor – 08.10.29

Vacancy

Vacancy

Parent Governors:

Mrs Catherine Davies – 17.10.28

Mrs Anne Jones – 28.06.27

Ms Monica Novick – 19.03.29

Vacancy

Vacancy

Vacancy

Community Governors:

Mr Jeff Johnson – 14.11.28

Mrs Alison Davies – 01.12.26

Rev. Adam Pawley – 25.06.29

Mrs Sarah Bowyer – 24.09.29

Vacancy

Teacher Governors:

Mrs Sharon Lewis – 05.07.26

Mrs Natalie Forsyth – 28.06.27

Staff Governor:

Vacancy

Headteacher:

Mr Jon Arnold

The full Governing Body meets at least once every term and subsequently through a series of committees.

The Chair of Governors, Mr Jeff Johnson, can be contacted via the school (Tel: 01938 552014) as can the Clerk to the Governors, Mrs Karen Davies.

Parent Governors are elected by other parents.

Teacher Governors are elected by teaching staff at the school.

Staff Governors are elected by non-teaching staff at the school.

Community Governors are elected by the Governing Body.

LEA Governors are elected by the Local Authority.

Financial Statement 2024/25

Income

LEA Budget	£4,355,284
Statemented	£ 17,167
School meals adjustment	£
Pupil Movement (Adj.)	£
W.G. Grants	£ 469,197
Other Grants & Income	£ 99,665

TOTAL **£ 4,941,313**

Net Surplus / (Deficit) Brought Forward
In Year Underspend
Reserve / (Deficit) Carried Forward

Expenditure

Staffing	£4,207,298
Curriculum	£ 215,289
Premises	£ 366,378
Operational	£ 116,618
Catering Service	£ 53,537

TOTAL **£4,959,120**

£ (116,695)
£ (17,807)
£ (134,502)

Estyn – the 5 key areas of recommendation

Recommendation 1

Strengthen leadership to ensure leaders at all levels evaluate their work accurately and robustly and secure improvements needed.

Recommendation 2

To improve the quality of teaching to ensure appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities.

Recommendation 3

Improve cross curricular planning to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills progressively.

Recommendation 4

Improve attendance.

Recommendation 5

Increase the opportunities pupils have to use Welsh outside of Welsh lessons.

Attendance

Attendance has once again improved. We continue to monitor attendance weekly and have fortnightly meetings with our Educational Welfare Officer. Our Family Liaison Officer is utilised daily, and attendance continues to be high profile across the school and continues to be a priority on the new whole school development plan. Assemblies have been used to set targets, and supportive letters have been sent home. Attendance meetings have taken place with a member of the Educational Welfare Team present. The pastoral team continues to work extremely hard in monitoring attendance and supporting both pupils and parents with any attendance issues. Our Attendance Officer produces half-term reports looking at specific data and we use data to compare trends both locally and nationally. Lateness has been tackled in reception from 8.55am – 9.30am and letters have been sent home to our persistent offenders. Consequently, pupils arriving late has reduced significantly.

School Leaver Destinations

This information is available in the School Prospectus, which can be accessed via the school website: <https://www.welshpool-hs.powys.sch.uk/>.

School Performance Indicators

Information relating to pupils, resources, attainment, benchmarking and attendance can be found on: <https://www.myllocalschool.gov.wales>.

Year 11 celebratory events

Year 11 went to Alton Towers in June after their examinations. Pupils were invited based on their behaviour during their last academic year. The trip proved to be very positive and enjoyable. Year 11 also had a leaving party that was held in May in Theatr Clera.

Links with the Community

Careers

We continue to have very strong links with local companies and this year several employers have been into school to present career talks during lesson time. Employers and Employees have delivered talks regarding their own career pathway and explained the link between education, progression and aspirations. All pupils found the sessions motivating and inspirational.

The school continues to deliver a full range of careers and guidance provision and engages with Careers Wales. Careers Wales delivered workshops to years 9, 10 and 11. Individual interviews are available to all pupils at any time. Our Careers Advisor attends specific parent evenings throughout the year, and this includes Options Evening. Further information regarding Careers Wales can be found on our school website.

Our careers guidance continues to be a strength of the school and pupils demonstrate that they are confident to request personal interviews.

Year 10 were successful in finding over 150 placements for their work experience.

In key stage 4 we continue to offer a small group of learners the opportunity to have a work placement one day a week.

Provision for Students to Participate in Sport

Curriculum

- Invasion games – football, rugby, basketball, netball, hockey.
- Net games – badminton, tennis, table tennis.
- Target or striking games – indoor bowls, cricket, rounders, softball, dodgeball.
- Athletics, cross country and swimming.
- Health related exercise – circuits, use of leisure centre facilities including the fitness suite and spinning.
- Level 3 Community Sports Leader Award [CSLA] – Year 12 students – opportunity to gain an additional qualification which gains them UCAS points.
- Outdoor education – to include orienteering and problem solving.
- Sports Day for Years 7-10.

Extra-Curricular

Throughout the year there were opportunities for pupils to get involved in:

- Lunchtime clubs for football, badminton, hockey, rounders, cricket and table tennis.
- After school clubs for football, rugby, hockey, netball, tennis, cricket, rounders, ultimate frisbee and athletics.
- Inter-house competitions in football, netball, rounders, cross country and athletics.
- Year 8 Adventurous Activities residential trip to Eryri.
- Netball residential trip in Condover.

- School representation in a variety of different sports. We had success in the following competitions:
 U12 Boys and U18 Girls Powys Football Champions, reaching the last 4 and the last 8 schools in Wales respectively.
 U12, U14 and U16 Girls North Powys Netball Champions, with the U16 Girls progressing through to the Welsh finals in Haverfordwest.
 U14 Boys North Powys Rugby Champions.
 U15 Boys Rugby North Wales Plate Champions.
 Several winners at the North Powys Schools Swimming Gala.
 U15 Boys and U15 Girls North Powys Badminton Champions.
 U14 Girls, U16 Girls and U18 Girls North Powys Hockey Champions
 U15 Girls Powys Athletics Champions.
 U13 Boys and U13 Girls North Powys Basketball Champions.
 Several winners at the Powys Schools Cross Country and Athletics Championships, with many going on to compete at the national finals in Brecon and Aberdare respectively.
 Several pupils represented Powys at the Welsh Indoor Athletics Championships in Cwmbran with some then going on to represent Wales at the UK finals in Stoke.
 U13 Girls and U15 Boys North Powys Tennis Champions, with the boys going on to become North Wales Champions too
 U15 Boys Cricket Team won the James Corfield Memorial Trophy.

PSE

PSE continues to be delivered by form tutors in school. We offer flexibility in our schemes of work depending on local and national trends. We use our PSE curriculum to celebrate and raise achievement and have guest speakers into school to deliver special assemblies. Our local police liaison officer comes into school every half term to deliver a variety of workshops to pupils in all year groups. Local and national trends are monitored, and we adjust our PSE programme to suit the needs of our pupils and community.

Behaviour, Praise and Sanction

We continue to celebrate academic achievement daily. Using our lesson grade descriptors, our pupils received more grade 1's than ever before. Our 3's and 4's have been reduced significantly as well and our student council report that they are very happy with the lesson grade descriptors and have explained during their student council meetings that the grade descriptors are working well in their lessons.

School Highlights

Throughout the year pupils have been given many opportunities to enter both local and national art and photography competitions, including the Montgomeryshire Society annual art competition, the Urdd Eisteddfod, Shrewsbury Drapers Textiles competition and a community art collaboration with the Welshpool Integrated Family Centre. We also ran an annual in-house competition to design the official school Christmas card which is sent out to local businesses and school associates.

The Friends of Welshpool High school ran a competition to design the official logo for the group, with the winning artist getting the opportunity to visit the company and see their design being produced.

In collaboration with Montgomeryshire Wildlife trust, Sixth Form students had the opportunity to contribute to the Wild Skills Wild Places project. Working with the team at Severn Farm Nature Reserve and artist Val Khul, members of Years 12 and 13 used spray paints to help paint up the new mural designs on the containers at the site. The initiative, funded by Tesco Stronger Starts, was aimed at connecting people with nature and their local environment and gave learners an excellent opportunity to try out new skills.

A group of Year 10 pupils attended a GCSE English writing workshop at Shrewsbury High School in March, which gave them the opportunity to delve into the art of narrative storytelling, exploring techniques to refine and enhance their writing skills. The pupils also had the exciting opportunity to meet local author, Stephen Palmer, gaining valuable insights into the writing process.

In February, a group of Year 7 pupils attended the Scribblers' Tour, run by the Hay Festival, at Wrexham University. This event forms part of the ongoing literacy transition programme and Year 7 learners accompanied Year 5 & 6 pupils from our cluster primary schools. This interactive and engaging event allowed the pupils to gain an insight into the writing process with authors Steve Camden and Liz Hyder. In June we then hosted the primary pupils at Welshpool High School for a writing workshop, allowing the Year 6 pupils the opportunity to work alongside our Year 7 learners.

Year 7 pupils took part in a sponsored 'readathon' in the Spring term and raised £375, which was spent on new books for the library. Having worked in partnership with Usborne books, we also received a bonus of 30% on top of the amount raised and some of our keen readers had the opportunity to choose how to spend the money.

Criw Cymraeg helped to the school to achieve the Gwobr Efydd / Bronze Award Siater Iaith.

A total of 60 students from Years 7, 8 and 11 competed in the UK Maths Challenge, an event designed to test the ability of the best mathematicians in the UK. In January competitors from Welshpool High School competing in the Intermediate challenge were awarded 7 bronze, 3 silver and 1 gold certificate. Of those competing in the Junior Challenge in May, a total of 6 students gained a bronze certificate and 3 achieved silver certificates.

The Dragons Den Presentations took place on 24th & 25th March as part of the enterprise and Employability Challenge. Several Governors were involved as 'Dragons' for the event. All of Year 10 were involved in groups, presenting their 'product' or 'service', designed during Welsh Baccalaureate lessons.

The Community Challenge took place on 30th June - 2nd July. All of Year 10 were involved in coaching Years 7, 8 and Primary School students. This was an excellent opportunity to develop a host of skills. Feedback from observers was universally positive.

The Geography department ran field trips for KS4 and KS5. The Year 10 pupils visited Aberystwyth to collect data for their unit 3 NEA. Year 11 pupils visited Oswestry and Welshpool to look at changes over time. Year 12 pupils visited Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury to collect primary data for the unit 2 AS exam and Year 13 students visited Ynyslas and Chester to help with their unit 5 individual investigations.

The Humanities faculty also ran the Year 7 Castles Trip for KS3 to visit local Churches and Dolforwyn and Montgomery castles.

On 1st July, pupils from Years 7, 8 and 9, from the school SNAG group and after school Cooking Club took part in helping famous chef, Jamie Oliver, to break the GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ title for the largest cookery lesson (multiple venues). Pupils set up their ingredients, ready to make homemade pasta and tomato sauce from scratch, waiting eagerly to join Jamie and his cooking school online via a Zoom call. Pupils did a great job keeping up in the busy, hot and frantic session, whilst photo evidence was collected. Well done to all involved as they were fantastic and, of course, at the end they got to eat their pasta dish. We had to eagerly wait to see if we had actually managed to break the record. However, a few days later, we received this message from Jamie Oliver: *‘WOW - what a fantastic achievement! Together, we smashed the Guinness World Records™ title for the largest cookery lesson (in multiple venues) - and you are a record breaker! Drumroll, please. The final numbers are in... 10,515 cooks, across 6 continents and 42 countries helped smash the record!’*

Music update

The department was lucky enough to receive some funding from the Powys Music Plan to run a String and Brass taster day at the start of the year. Across the day all Year 7 pupils were able to hear performances on the violin and brass instruments and have a go on the instruments themselves. 40 pupils took up the offer of free taster sessions and 20 have continued to learn, leading to what will hopefully be our first string group in 10 years.

The Concert Band played a crucial role performing stand-alone items and accompanying the carols at The RABI Christmas Concert at the Livestock Market at Christmas.

The department travelled to Birmingham Symphony Hall on Friday, 21st February 2025, to see a concert featuring the film music of John Williams performed by Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed.

During February half term, three students represented Welshpool High School at Lampeter University with National Youth Arts Wales at their choir skills residency and were singled out for praise in terms of conduct and enthusiasm.

On Sunday, 2nd March 2025, the Jazz Band took a trip out into the community to perform in a concert at Pool Quay Church as part of their St. Davids Day celebrations. They featured as part of a varied programme of musical items and really did to the school and themselves proud with their standard of performance.

Over the Easter holidays we were very proud to see and hear four students taking part in the National Youth Arts Wales Jazz residency in Cardiff. It was the first of its kind and an opportunity for all the students to really challenge themselves and immerse themselves in the style at a National level.

We are very proud to say that this term we have another student joining the Junior Royal Northern College of Music. This really is such an achievement, and to see two of our pupils now attending is certainly something to be proud of.

It has been a real privilege see our Music Ambassador team grow in confidence across this year. To end the year, they held a meeting with Lynsey McCrohon (Strategic Lead for Music and Expressive Arts) to showcase their ideas and to act as a working party to feed their ideas into the National Plan for Music in Powys. In the meeting they yet again impressed with the mature way in which they contributed to discussions and their imaginative yet constructive ideas.

The bi-annual school concerts have yet again proved a success, with pupils performing to full audiences both at Christmas and in the Summer.

Learning Support Provision

The Additional Learning Needs policy can be viewed on our school website: <https://www.welshpool-hs.powys.sch.uk/>.

The Additional Learning Needs Department was renamed 'Calon' at the end of summer term 2024. This is the Welsh translation of 'heart' and was chosen in collaboration with the pupils who benefit from the support in the department. It was felt that this word encompassed the ethos of the department and of Welshpool High School. Since then, we have developed a garden area outside the department which the children have named 'Sgwar Calon'. This is an area for children to sit and enjoy the scented plants, fruit and vegetables. The children are responsible for maintaining the garden and ensuring that it is clean and tidy.

Effective transition plans are put into place from Year 5/6 and continue to develop through person-centred practice throughout high school, with gradual transition through each key stage and on to further training or Year 12/13.

The Calon department is well supported by an experienced team of full and part-time Teaching Assistants. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) are supported successfully both educationally and emotionally. Pupils are successfully supported throughout the examination period and during the transition to college.

Intervention programmes and support are provided individually and in small groups to develop spelling, handwriting, reading and numeracy strategies; to increase resilience and manage anxiety. We are making good use of the support offered from specialist teachers through the ALN group consultation panels and PIP process.

There are 2 fully trained MELSA's and 2 ELSA's within the department who are available to support pupils with their educational and emotional needs. We also have a trained facilitator of the 'drawing and talking' programme. All of the TAs are mental health first aiders.

The school supports EAL pupils to develop their strategies for learning in both English and their first language and to mentor them as they progress from KS3 to KS4.

Person-Centred Practices are embedded throughout the review process in Calon. This is another step towards the transition to the new Additional Learning Needs Act (2018). We are in the fifth year of the implementation programme which began in September 2021. All pupils have now been converted to the new system.

Close relationships continue to be built and maintained with outside agencies such as Sensory Services, Youth Intervention Service, Young Carers and the School Nurse, all of whom are welcomed into the department to meet regularly with pupils to strengthen resilience and improve outcomes.

There are 3 fully trained members of staff within the department who ensure that pupils with diabetes are cared for appropriately in school.

Having built positive relationships with local businesses, the Calon Department are hoping to be able to invite them in to do activities with and to speak to the pupils who are doing the King's Trust Achieve Programme. As part of this, we have welcomed Matt Rising, the Young People's Voice Facilitator from Powys County Council to work alongside children who have been involved with services. We are looking forward to a range of activities being arranged for some of our most vulnerable pupils.

Policy Review

Schools are required to have a large number of policies in place. These policies are reviewed regularly, and members of the governing body are involved in this process.

Policies reviewed in 2024/25 were:

- Careers Education
- Data Protection
- Anti Bullying
- Pupil Discipline & Exclusion
- Freedom of Information
- Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)
- Acceptable Use
- Staff Grievance
- Pay
- Governors' Allowance
- Health & Safety
- Performance Management
- eSafety
- Attendance

- Additional Learning Needs
- Complaints Procedure
- Safeguarding
- Curriculum
- Inclement Weather
- Collective Worship
- Staff Disciplinary
- Staff Capability
- Flexible Working
- Management of Change and Redundancy
- Special Leave
- Supporting Learners with Healthcare Needs
- Unacceptable Actions by Complainants
- Whistleblowing
- Traffic Management
- Social Media Policy for Staff
- Charging, Remission & Lettings
- Equal Opportunities
- Examination Malpractice
- Food & Fitness
- Governor School Visits
- Child Looked After (CLA)
- ESDGC
- Habitual or Vexatious Complainants
- School Dogs/Therapy Dogs
- Substance Misuse (Staff)
- Supporting Working Parents
- Volunteering in Schools
- Substance Misuse (Pupils)

Current versions of policies of interest to parents are all posted to the school website, under Documents.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

2025 - 26

Autumn Term:

- Monday 1 September 2025 to Friday 24 October 2025
- **Half Term - Monday 27 October 2025 to Friday 31 October 2025**
- Monday 3 November 2025 to Friday 19 December 2025

Spring Term:

- Monday 5 January 2026 to Friday 13 February 2026
- **Half Term - Monday 16 February 2026 to Friday 20 February 2026**
- Monday 23 February 2026 to Friday 27 March 2026

Summer Term:

- Monday 13 April 2026 to Friday 22 May 2026
- **Half-term - Monday 25 May 2026 to Friday 29 May 2026**
- Monday 1 June 2025 to Friday 17 July 2026

Non-pupil days:

- Monday 1 September 2025
- Monday 5 January 2026
- There will be three further non-pupil days. Please check the school website for these details.

2026 - 27

Autumn Term:

- Tuesday 1 September 2026 to Friday 23 October 2026
- **Half Term - Monday 26 October 2026 to Friday 30 October 2026**
- Monday 2 November 2026 to Tuesday 22 December 2026

Spring Term:

- Monday 4 January 2027 to Friday 5 February 2027
- **Half Term - Monday 8 February 2027 to Friday 12 February 2027**
- Monday 15 February 2027 to Friday 19 March 2027

Summer Term:

- Monday 5 April 2027 to Friday 28 May 2027
- **Half-term - Monday 31 May 2027 to Friday 4 June 2027**
- Monday 7 June 2027 to Friday 16 July 2027

Non-pupil days:

- Tuesday 1 September 2026
- Monday 4 January 2027
- There will be three further non-pupil days. Please check the school website for these details.

School Prospectuses

Our new prospectus is available to download on the school website: <https://www.welshpool-hs.powys.sch.uk/>, as is our 6th Form prospectus. A limited number of hard copies will be available in the front office.

Curriculum & Educational Provision

Welshpool High School provides an effective curriculum which meets the needs of the pupils.

In Key Stage 3, all Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) are delivered to pupils. The collaboration with partner Primary schools to ensure consistency in curriculum provision continues to be effective as we continue on our journey of delivering the new Curriculum for Wales. Appropriate intervention is established to support the development of Literacy and Numeracy skills through such initiatives as intervention sessions and the reading behaviours strategy. The curriculum is arranged to ensure that more able pupils are stretched to meet their potential and that more vulnerable pupils are supported through Calon and quality first wave teaching. The Literacy and Numeracy Framework is an integral part of provision across the curriculum, and the implementation of the Digital Competency Framework continues to progress.

The Curriculum for Wales has been implemented with all pupils in Key Stage 3. Recently introduced Wave 1 Made for Wales qualifications are being delivered in Year 10 for the first time.

In Key Stage 4, the school offers a good range of general and vocational courses, including classroom and offsite provision. All of the core subjects are covered comprehensively, with all pupils following the Welsh Baccalaureate course, mostly at National (Level 2) level. In addition, most pupils complete the full course GCSE in Welsh as a 2nd Language. The school is successful in ensuring that pupils are guided effectively in making choices of study for optional subjects, and the school continues to meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure.

In the Sixth Form, a range of general and vocational courses are offered, and this offer is broadened further through effective collaboration with Chweched Powys Sixth partners. All of the facilitating subjects preferred by the Russell Group of Universities are available. Post 16 transformation work continues at a county wide level, with strategic and operational management boards commissioning the curriculum offer across Powys.

Language Category

English Medium.

Welsh Language

We deliver Welsh Second Language in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Welsh First Language is not offered in the curriculum.

Healthy Eating and Drinking

Powys Catering provides food and drink during lunch. The menu on offer complies fully with the Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measures 2009 and the Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional standards and requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2003. The identity of those students receiving free school meals is protected by the biometric system.

Toilet Facilities

Welshpool High School has toilet facilities in the following areas:

Girls' Gymnasium – 10 toilets

Boys' Gymnasium – 10 toilets

Science downstairs – 1 male and 1 female staff toilet

Mathematics department – 1 toilet + 1 toilet in Senior Assistant Headteacher's office

Drama/Art departments – 2 female staff toilets

English department – 3 toilets for girls, 2 for boys and 1 for staff

Humanities department – 4 for girls, 2 for boys and 2 for staff, plus 1 accessible toilet

Department for Learning Support – 1 accessible toilet used for staff and students

Theatre – 2 toilets and an accessible toilet

Reception – 1 accessible toilet

Technology department – 1 staff toilet

6th Form Block/Business Partnership Centre – 1 staff toilet

Outside canteen area – 3 female staff toilets; 1 male toilet; 1 accessible toilet

Medical room – 1 toilet

Headteacher's office – 1 toilet

All toilets, sinks, taps and doors are cleaned each day Monday to Friday by trained staff.