

Survey of the Procedure of Developing **Ysgol Bro Idris, Dolgellau**

Gareth Williams

April 2018

Contents:

1. Principles for the report	Page 3
2. Prologue	Page 3
3. General	Page 4
4. Meeting of Education Officers	Page 5
5. Principles of an All-through School	Page 6
6. The School's Governance	Page 7
7. The Trade Unions	Page 9
8. Primary Headteachers from the Y Gader Catchment Area	Page 10
9. GYDCA	Page 12
10. The School's teachers	Page 14
11. Pupils	Page 16
12. Conclusions	Page 17
13. Recommendations	Page 19
Appendix	Page 20

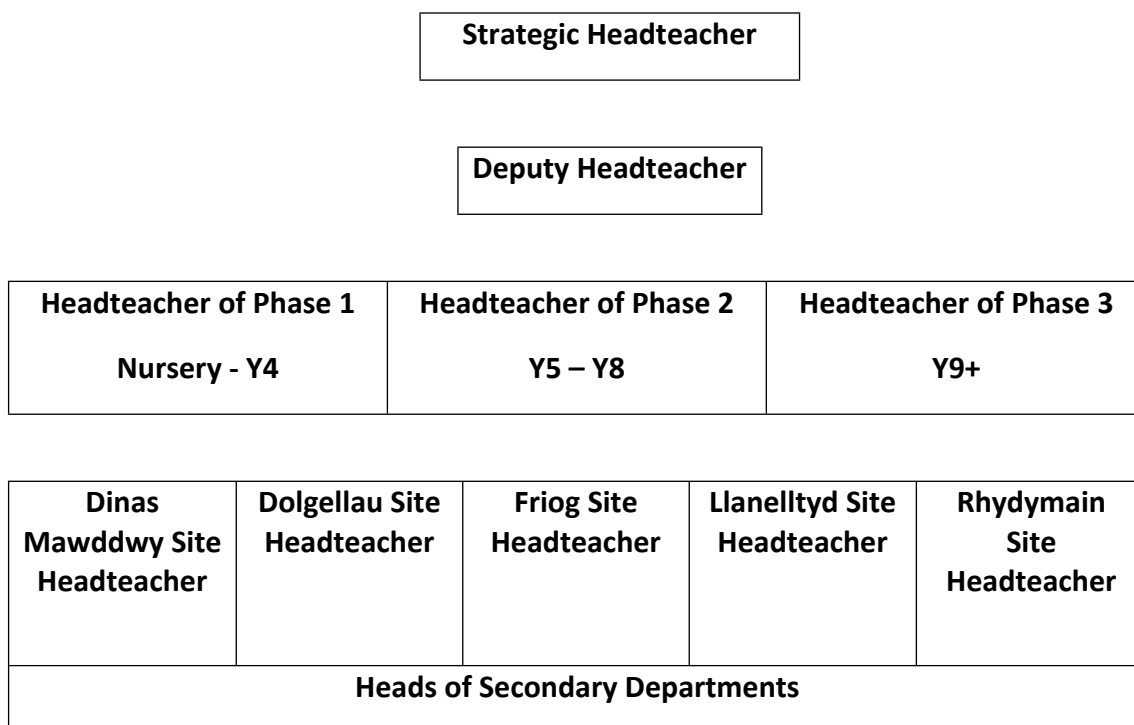
1. PRINCIPLES FOR THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report was commissioned by Gwynedd Council to address some concerns amongst former members of staff from the Y Gader catchment area regarding some aspects of the process of establishing Ysgol Bro Idris. During the discussions regarding the work's brief, it was made clear that one of the main purposes of the work was to learn lessons from the process for similar processes in the future.
- 1.2 This is an unbiased report on the structure used to develop Ysgol Bro Idris, Dolgellau.
- 1.3 An initial meeting was held with Gwynedd Council's Head of Education Department, noting the requirements and expectations.
- 1.4 This meeting was intentionally kept brief and to the point so that no prejudices were divulged beforehand (25 minutes).
- 1.5 At this initial meeting:
 - i. documents of relevance to the investigation were shared;
 - ii. agreement was reached on initial actions with:
 - a. The Headteacher of Ysgol Bro Idris;
 - b. Representatives from Gwynedd Council;
 - c. The Chair of the Shadow Governing Body, Ysgol Bro Idris;
 - ch. The leaders of the group that lodged complaints against the Authority.
- 1.6 It was agreed that the investigation would run its own course so that the information obtained would be as thorough as possible.

2. PROLOGUE

- 2.1 Ysgol Bro Idris is a new school. It is not an adaptation of Ysgol y Gader and the primary schools in the catchment area.
- 2.2 It is essentially important that people understand this principle. This is not a secondary school with satellite primary schools, rather it is ONE SCHOOL with sites in six areas across the area.
- 2.3 The school's management structure has been drawn up to reflect this.

2.4 This is the management structure for Ysgol Bro Idris:



2.5 The Strategic Headteacher was appointed to commence in post in January 2016, and began in her post April 2016. Her initial task was to consider the structures of similar schools in other parts of Wales and beyond before reaching a decision on the management structure of Ysgol Bro Idris.

3. GENERAL

3.1 The structure of this report will be based on contributions from a number of different stakeholders. Consequently, there will be overlapping views between the various stakeholders. Although this will be repetitive, it is important that an understanding of the views and opinions of various cohorts are gathered and recorded.

3.2 There was a lack of sufficient awareness of the staffing situation in the area's schools. The Dolgellau area is not very attractive for teachers to come and teach in the area. At Ysgol Uwchradd Y Gader, substantial difficulties were experienced in filling existing posts; however, there was a feeling that the new Ysgol Bro Idris would be very attractive for teachers to come to the Dolgellau area. This problem was not anticipated, and the first step of advertising every post externally with a promise of an interview to the present staff was done without properly considering the psychological impact

of this on the area's existing workforce, although the decision was not implemented in the end.

- 3.3 A number of problems had existed at some of the area's schools and an undertone of staff had not acted extensively enough. Nevertheless, after changes in the schools' leadership, the teachers rose to the challenge, and lifted the schools from the low categories they had found themselves in.
- 3.4 There was a lack of understanding from many directions and insufficient recognition was given to the:
- i. hard work that the catchment area's school staff had done following firm leadership at the schools;
 - ii. real negative impact of the original decision not to put aside the jobs and decide to advertise externally; (This was changed but the damage had been done and it led to many tensions between the staff and governance of the new school and the impact of this decision on the workforce's morale).
 - iii. fact that the area was not attractive to a vast range of job applicants.

4. MEETING OF EDUCATION OFFICERS

- 4.1 At the meeting with the relevant Education Officers, it was agreed that the LA had followed restructuring structures technically correct.
- 4.2 There were some matters that the Authority had not anticipated, for example, there was an expectation that pupils from the primary schools that would close would attend the sites noted by Ysgol Bro Idris. This did not happen; some parents of the schools that closed chose to send their children to different organisations to the recommendation of Ysgol Bro Idris.
- 4.3 Consequently, the Authority did not know the exact numbers of pupils at each site. This caused difficulties to put protection money in place, and a difficulty, therefore, to set a draft budget for each site.
- 4.4 The officer noted that he was of the opinion that it would have been valuable to get the Unions involved in the discussions from the outset. This would have mitigated many of the problems highlighted later in the process. Nevertheless, it is emphasised that the structures that the LA took were technically correct.
- 4.5 One weakness was the Council's lack of vision of what is meant by All-through School so as to ensure a model for consideration by the Governing Body and the school.
- 4.6 It was managed to reduce the number of primary sites from eight to five. This exercise had been party to discussions and consultation since 2010,

however, the consideration given to an all-through school at the time was scarce. The failure of the current exercise was relating the reorganisation to the principles of an all-through school.

- 4.7 No appointment was made to the post of Headteacher of Ysgol Bro Idris following the first advertisement. Following the second advertisement, an appointment was made, however months had been lost and the school had been without professional leadership.
- 4.8 The Shadow Governing Body requested a High Level Project Leader to lead on this project. Although there was an element of support to the project, this was not on a sufficiently high level to make strategic decisions or to lead and hold the communications between the Authority, staff and parents so that there was a sense of assurance as the work progressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Authority should create a draft allocation very early in the process so that the staffing structure and a balanced budget can be ensured early on.
- The Authority should possess a clearer vision of the principles of an All-through School for the future.
- A Project Leader should be appointed to be responsible for the entire project (from start to finish), which is accountable to the Authority's Programme Board, and co-operates with the GB and all stakeholders.

5. PRINCIPLES OF AN ALL-THROUGH SCHOOL

- 5.1 What are the principles of an all-through school? According to Vanessa Williams, Director of Ark Schools and the founder of King Solomon's (all-through) Academy:

"I think the biggest advantage is about having a shared philosophy and ethos which ensures that there is greater consistency around expectations, pedagogy and the cultural ethos of the school"

- 5.2 According to an article in the Independent:

"Many educationalists favour this model of schooling because it eliminates any unsettling transition between the primary and secondary stages. Having all ages on site also enables older pupils to act as mentors for younger children, while primary pupils benefit from having specialist science and language available and sharing sports facilities that stand-alone primaries can only dream about."

- 5.3 One could list endless quotes regarding the principles of an all-through school, however, basically, the 9-13 year old stage is one of the most key stages in the educational lives of pupils. It is my opinion that not enough research was conducted to set the direction and vision for establishing Ysgol Bro Idris.
- 5.4 Apart from the 0 to 3 years old stage, the 9 to 13 years old stage is the one where the greatest changes are seen in a person. Astonishing emotional and physical changes happen, however, the education system divides the pupils' careers into two different structures and procedures.
- 5.5 There is a really strong argument for bringing the education of these pupils - years 5/6/7 and 8 - much closer together in order to prevent the drop in standards and education when transferring from the 'primary' to the 'secondary'.
- 5.6 Basically, as one of the teachers' unions suggested, all that has happened is that there is a structure of one school uniform with one Headteacher, however, it operates as one secondary school and five primary schools.
- 5.7 Following her appointment, the Strategic Headteacher of Ysgol Bro Idris attempted to get Y5 and Y6 pupils to establish under the same roof as the rest of the secondary department. Considerable objection was voiced as this had not been referred to in the consultation when Ysgol Bro Idris had been established.
- 5.8 The Headteacher managed to reach a compromise by ensuring that Y6 spent one day a week in the secondary department but this continues to be far from the principles of an All-through School. Nevertheless, it is important to see the views of Y5 and Y6 on this in section 12 of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Authority should possess a clearer vision of the principles of an All-through School for the future (In accordance with the recommendation in Section 4)

6. THE SCHOOL'S GOVERNANCE

- 6.1 A Shadow Governing Body was established to prepare for the new school. A total of 20 members were on the Shadow GB, and the body was served robustly by an Assistant Area Education Officer.
- 6.2 In addition, arrangements were made that the Headteachers of the catchment area were members of the Shadow Board, until the Strategic Headteacher would be appointed to the post.

- 6.3 When the Strategic Headteacher was appointed, pressure came from the direction of the catchment area's Headteachers to continue on the Board. This was agreed but only as observers.
- 6.4 The Governing Body was very awkward with up to 20 governors, the Strategic Headteacher, and the Headteachers as observers. The governors questioned felt that this Body was much too clumsy, and as a result, that achieving strategic developments was incredibly difficult. It was noted that there was a feeling that the body acted as a "public meeting."
- 6.5 The GB, very early in the process, and prior to the appointment of a Strategic Headteacher, wanted a high status Project Leader to proceed with the work. Efforts were made to do this, however, they did not last long and possibly they did not have sufficient status.
- 6.6 As this was such a major project and such a new project for the Authority, a Project Leader should have been appointed at the commencement of the project in order to:
- i. Reduce the burden on the Governing Body.
 - ii. Create an open communication structure between the Authority, the GB and all staff of all schools.
 - iii. Facilitate the strategic work of the Strategic Headteacher as she had to develop the entire vision and strategy of the school without a management team.
 - iv. Ensure that the project developed more smoothly.
- 6.7 When deciding on a staff appointment structure, an original proposal was received to advertise every post externally. However, after many objections, this was changed to internal appointments, if possible.
- 6.8 Although the GB made the decision for the right reasons, i.e. seeking the best possible staff to work at the new school, considerable ill-feeling was caused amongst the staff in the catchment area. The Dolgellau area was not naturally attractive to staff. The secondary sector had experienced great difficulties in appointing to some disciplines over the previous years. Falling back on a decision provided ammunition to the school's objectors who were ready to note the weaknesses of the school's governance.
- 6.9 Conclusions:
- i. The Chair of the GB had done exceptional work in managing to get structures in place in an incredibly difficult situation.

- ii. All the Headteachers should not have been observers, rather they should have elected one to represent them. This group was very influential and obstructed, and undermined, the status of the Strategic Headteacher.
- iii. Due to the size of the GB and its observers, a strategic sub-panel should have been in place to support the work of the Strategic Headteacher to set a structure for the school as this was essential in order to set staff numbers and a managerial structure for the school.

7. THE TRADE UNIONS

- 7.1 The Teachers' Unions were of the opinion that insufficient consultation took place regarding the staffing structure at Ysgol Bro Idris.
- 7.2 The unions heavily criticised the unions for the communication procedure between the Bro Idris organisation, the unions and the teachers.
- 7.3 The three unions were very critical of the lack of information given to teachers and this created uncertainty and unnecessary concern. One union noted that it was essential to let staff know what was going on:

"The authority, the governors and Strategic Headteacher had no information for the unions..."

This led to rumours, often unfounded, due to the lack of communication...

The staff were continuously "in the dark".

The meetings with the education officers were insensitive towards the dire situation of the staff.

The feedback procedure following interviews was inconsistent (although guidance had been provided to the school). This needed to have been established at the beginning of the process."

- 7.4 The unions noted that the Authority had missed an opportunity, although there was no legal requirement to do so, to offer early retirement to staff, as this would have mitigated some of the concerns.
- 7.5 In general, the unions believed that the Authority should have followed TUPE rules to appoint, rather than the procedure actually used. When challenging the unions on this, they were asked whether or not every teacher was competent to move to an equivalent post. Their views were made explicitly clear - these teachers were not under the capability procedure - and so there was no reason not to offer them an equivalent post.

- 7.6 There was a lack of information about agreed criteria in terms of staff appointment. For example, what percentage of the criteria accounted for:
- i. Teaching ability;
 - ii. Standards of pupils' work;
 - iii. The professional interview;
 - iv. The full interview.
- 7.7 One union compared the structures of establishing Bro Idris with two schools in Gwynedd, as well as all-through establishments in other parts of Wales. The union noted that the problems at Bro Idris were much more turbulent because of the communication difficulties and the lack of vision.
- 7.8 In a communication between one Union and the Strategic Headteacher/GB, it was noted that the appointment procedure had existed for five months prior to the face-to-face meeting.
- 7.9 The three unions noted that the structure of "ring fencing" had not happened from the outset, and one union noted that regular rumours were heard and that a feeling of "new school - new staff" existed. This created further uncertainty and concern regarding the future of the staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The professional unions should be brought in at the beginning of the process.
- Clear and completely open criteria should be established at the beginning of the appointment process so that no further ambiguity arises further on in the process.
- Much more sympathy should be shown towards staff who were considerably concerned about their future.
- Regular communication should be ensured between the Authority/school and all staff to ensure an open procedure.

For further information: a meeting request was sent to UNISON, however, this union did not respond to the request.

8. PRIMARY HEADTEACHERS FROM THE Y GADER CATCHMENT AREA

- 8.1 Meetings were held with four former Headteachers of the catchment area's primary schools. On the whole, their views were consistent:

The Authority had a lack of vision regarding a lifelong school. Nothing was clear.

- i. The failure to "ring fence" jobs created a sense that staff who had given years of service, some of who had worked exceptionally hard to get schools out of Estyn measures, were being undervalued.
- ii. There was great uncertainty regarding what jobs were available and so this made it very difficult for staff to know which jobs to apply for. Job descriptions were not available early enough and they were not clear enough. Clearer appointment criteria were needed. As the Authority or Headteacher/GB had not shown sympathy towards the staff, and as the unions had not been a part of setting the staffing structure, the primary Headteachers of the catchment area felt that they had had to protect the staff.
- iii. Some of the Headteachers saw the value of merging Y5/6/7 and 8, but others did not share the same view. The objection derived from the fact that this was not part of the original vision. As the school attempted to change this and bring Y5 and Y6 to work at the secondary department, there was a lack of sufficiently clear communication to the various stakeholders in explaining the reasoning, purpose and advantages of this change.
- iv. One Headteacher felt that some of the staff were refusing to accept any changes. This led to negativity towards Ysgol Bro Idris.
- v. Communication with the staff was weak.
- vi. Some of the Headteachers showed great sympathy towards the Strategic Headteacher and the GB as they had to act without support. There were strong feelings of opposition to the fact that the School Council was involved in the appointment process, as a high percentage of the catchment area's staff were being interviewed and a number were naturally rejected. Although there was no objection to the principle of involving the School Council, the situation at Bro Idris was exceptionally sensitive, internally in the school and externally in the community. It was felt that the pupils' role was unfortunate in such a sensitive situation.
- vii. In general, appreciation was shown towards the Course for Change held by Gwynedd's Human Resources Department, however, it was noted that only four governors attended this course.

8.2 Conclusion:

- i. The communication had been weak.

- ii. A clear enough vision of the purpose of an all-through school did not exist.
- iii. More robust criteria was needed for staff appointments.
- iv. The lack of "ring fencing" at the beginning had caused a lot of ill-feeling.
- v. Some members of staff refused to accept that change was going to happen.

9. GYDCA (Primary and Special Catchment Area Consultative Group)

9.1 A situation arose following a GYDCA meeting on 16.03.16.

9.2 This is the excerpt from the minutes that led to considerable tensions between the Authority and the Headteachers of Y Gader primary schools:

"As part of the item on Schools modernisation, an observation was made by one Union in particular regarding the appointment procedure that took place at Bro Idris, and specifically regarding the use of a pupil council in the process. The Headteacher of Ganllwyd agreed to ascertain the views of all staff in the Catchment area regarding the reorganisation process, for further discussion at GYDCA in the summer term. The observations will need to be sent to Mai Bere prior to the meeting." 16.03.16.

At this meeting, a strong representation of Authority officers were in attendance; however, no objection to this was noted in the minutes.

9.3 The Y Gader Headteachers acted on this by drawing up a questionnaire for teaching staff. The following is concluded from the questionnaire:

- i. it contained a lot of useful information;
- ii. observations were made, as well as answering the questions;
- iii. a response was received from a good representation of the catchment area's teaching staff;
- iv. the questions had not been drawn-up scientifically, and some of the questions were very closed;
- v. the Headteachers had made an error in the fact that they had noted that the questionnaire had been drawn-up on behalf of the Gwynedd Federation of Headteachers, rather than at the request of GYDCA.

9.4 This last clause led to considerable tensions and a formal letter was sent by the Authority for the attention of the Chair and Vice-chair of the Federation.

9.5 The responses of the Chair and Vice-chair categorically note that the Federation played no part in this matter.

- 9.6 The Y Gader Headteachers had made a mistake by noting in the questionnaire:

'A report on the reorganisation in the Y Gader Catchment Area was invited by the Gwynedd Federation of Headteachers...'

and as the Chair and Vice-chair of the Federation noted in their response to the Authority:

"The title is wrong. It should read:

'A report on the reorganisation in the Gader Catchment Area was invited by GYDCA' "

- 9.7 It is fair to say that the letter sent by the Authority to the Chair and Vice-chair of the Federation was one that caused a lot of unnecessary work to the two Headteachers in answering the questions raised.
- 9.8 The only question that should have been posed to the Federation was: "What part did the Federation play in this process with the Y Gader Headteachers?" This would have saved a lot of work to the Authority and to the Federation's officers.
- 9.9 It is concluded that the nature of the tone of the letter sent to the Federation and shared with the representatives of each catchment area was unfortunate, and that it created considerable, and unnecessary, ill-feeling amongst a number of the Headteachers of the catchment area.
- 9.10 It is concluded that a discussion should have been held between the Authority and GYDCA, rather than allegations/insinuations being made against the Federation.
- 9.11 It is concluded that mistakes were made on both sides, and it could be argued that the questionnaire was of a non-scientific nature; however, it did contain valuable information about the views of the teaching staff.
- 9.12 It is also concluded that the Authority had been exceptionally heavy-handed and overly critical of a simple request to obtain information about the feelings of the catchment area's staff.

10. THE SCHOOL'S TEACHERS

- 10.1 A brief meeting was held with all Ysgol Bro Idris teachers to invite them to give their views on:

- i. How would you suggest ways for the Authority to improve their process of establishing a new school which would have facilitated your situations?
 - ii. How has Ysgol Bro Idris established after a term of work?
- 10.2 Nine letters of response were received - four via e-mails and a conversation was held with another three teachers, giving a total of 15.
- 10.3 In general, the observations about the period prior to the official opening of the school were relatively similar:
 - i. This period was prolonged and exceptionally concerning for staff and their families. The process needed to be commenced much earlier so that everything was in place way before the school opened.
 - ii. There was a lack of regular information and no communication procedure. Some stakeholders knew more than others about what was going on.
 - iii. A clear staffing structure was lacking and therefore the teachers were unable to decide which jobs to apply for.
 - iv. The procedure of advertising jobs externally (when appointing internally had failed) undermined the staff's confidence and added to their concern.
 - v. Lack of funding from the outset to arrange transport for pupils and staff to move Sites.

It is concluded that the views of the teachers, to a great extent, is the same as the views of other stakeholders.

- 10.4 In terms of the way that Ysgol Bro Idris had developed over the first term, there are professional and balanced observations from the 15 members who contributed to the investigation:
 - i. There was a feeling that the first term had been difficult and heavy-going, but that the school had established well by the beginning of the second term.
 - ii. There was a feeling that the weekly visits of Y6 had been exceptionally successful and the need to develop this further.
 - iii. There was a feeling that "one school" had developed exceptionally effectively.
 - iv. The pupils appear very happy at the school.

- v. Effective emphasis on the work of the School Council

10.5 Nevertheless, the school needs to look at:

- i. Communication, which is a real challenge. Consideration should be given to further developing the technological systems to ensure consistent information.
- ii. There was a feeling that the SMT was heavy in terms of the primary, and that there is a lack of full understanding of WJEC courses, departmental funding etc. There was one suggestion to appoint an Examinations Officer to implement WJEC's structures.
- iii. There was a feeling that the primary had much more planning time than the secondary although that the staff realised that the five primary sites were very difficult for general planning. Nevertheless, there were also opportunities to plan between Y5/6 and Y7/8.
- iv. There was a general feeling that the Information Technology and tracking procedure was not effective enough and that the shortcomings in supporting the technology caused concerns.
- v. One teacher noted that the school's vision was not clear enough and that there is a lack of information for behaviour policies and a Language policy.
- vi. Due of the situation of the six sites, the expertise of the primary teachers are not used in full.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The SMT should hold 1:1 sessions with the staff, starting with heads of department, so that there is a clear joint-understanding of the departments' needs.
- Consideration should be given to joint-planning between Y5/6 and Y7/8 teachers so that the actual advantages of an All-through School are realised.

11. PUPILS

11.1 Three primary sites were visited where six schools had closed and had established as three primary sites.

11.2 The purpose of the visit was:

- i. To see how the pupils had settled at their new sites
 - ii. To see how the link with the secondary site was developing
- 11.3 The pupils spoke enthusiastically about their experiences at the new sites, and although they expressed some longing for their former school, they were obviously enjoying the new experience of working with more children, and children from areas other than their own villages.
- 11.4 Y6 pupils were exceptionally enthusiastic about having lessons at the secondary site. They attended the secondary site every Thursday and they were very enthusiastic when speaking about their experience. They received lessons in French, Technology, Physical Education and Science. They were eager to attend the secondary more often.
- 11.5 Y5, specifically at the smaller sites in terms of numbers, were more nervous but very eager to attend the secondary in the same way as Y6. They could see the enthusiasm of Y6 and were ready to go the following year. A number of Y5 pupils asked to go with Y6 on the Thursdays this year.
- 11.6 One Y6 pupil noted that he was also concerned before going for the first time in case they "got lost", but very soon, the experience became one that was eagerly looked forward to every week.
- 11.7 One site Headteacher noted that every Y6 parent at their site had expressed their absolute appreciation for the opportunity their children were having from the secondary experiences every Thursday.
- 11.8 It is concluded, nevertheless that a small number of parents continue to object to the opportunity for Y6 to attend the secondary, albeit a very small number. Peer pressure from the direction of the children should reduce this tension over time.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Authority should possess a clearer vision of the principles of an All-through School, particularly in relation to developing the 'middle school' in order to achieve the real value of an All-through School.
- Ysgol Bro Idris should further develop the link between Y5/6 and Y7/8 over the coming years in order to develop the principle of the Donaldson Report/Bright Future more robustly, and better relate to the principles of an All-through School.

12. CONCLUSIONS

- 12.1 There was real uncertainty amongst the Authority's officers regarding who was actually responsible for developing Ysgol Bro Idris as an all-through school. Although a number of officers were involved with different aspects of the project, no single person was actually responsible and no accountability procedure was in place. When making enquiries, it became apparent that nobody had an actual understanding of the full principles of an All-through School. Instead, it appeared more of a project to close a number of small schools in the catchment area.
- 12.2 As a result of the lack of guidance and lack of vision, very intense pressure was placed on the Governing Body (shadow).
- 12.3 Following the appointment of the Strategic Headteacher, some months into the process, this person had to research the principles of an all-through school, but this was much too late into the process. As the Strategic Headteacher was eager to bring Y5 and Y6 more into the secondary site as a natural part of Phase 2, objections were expressed since this had not appeared in the original plans.
- 12.4 The decision of the Shadow GB to advertise openly to the world (and then change their mind), created ill-feeling amongst the staff of the catchment area and created a feeling amongst the staff of the lack of value shown towards them as teachers.
- 12.5 Shortcomings were seen in the emotional support given to the catchment area's staff. Accurate and clear information was provided regarding the process, however, there was no follow-up to this in the form of support to staff who strongly felt that there was a possibility that they would lose their jobs.
- 12.6 Nevertheless, the Authority's Human Resources staff had done a lot of work that was appreciated as they assisted and prepared staff for interviews. As Human Resources staff were the ones who became face-to-face with staff in their role of developing them for interviews, they also, at this time, were the only public face of the Authority. This was unfair on the Human Resources staff.
- 12.7 There were definite shortcomings in the Staffing Structure at the beginning of the process. The staff were uncertain when applying for jobs as the whole structure had not been shared with them. This added to the uncertainty of staff.
- 12.8 The professional unions were kept at an arm's length of the appointment process. This was not discussed with the unions for some months. This was

an error, as collaborating with the unions would have prevented many problems later on in the process.

- 12.9 There was a lack of clear criteria regarding the appointment procedure. A visit was held to evaluate the teaching, along with an interview procedure. Nevertheless, none of the applicants were certain how much weighting was placed on the teaching evaluation, and how much weighting was on the interview. No consideration was given to the quality of pupils' work. A % score needed to be provided for these four fields.
- 12.10 Communication between the Authority / GB and different stakeholders was a matter to be addressed. This is where a Project Leader would have made a difference, by keeping all stakeholders in the picture throughout the project.
- 12.11 The work of seeking to merge the sites is to be praised and there is evidence that the Management Team have now developed the principle of "One School", within a term of the opening of the school. This deserves high praise.
- 12.12 There is a need to work further with parents to bring Y5 and Y6 closer to collaborating with Y7 and Y8 pupils.
- 12.13 There is also room to consider how to use expertise within the primary units so that every site is able to take advantage of the obvious expertise that exists. With the five primary sites and considerable distance between them, developing this will be no mean feat.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A vision should be set at the beginning of the process of establishing an All-through School, particularly in terms of developing the 'middle school' in order to achieve the real value of an All-through School.
- Attempts should continue to be made to appoint a Strategic Headteacher very early in the process, to enable the Headteacher, the Authority and the Governing Body to collaborate on the Authority's vision.
- A Project Leader should be appointed to be responsible for the entire project (from start to finish), which is accountable to the Authority's Programme Board, to the GB and to all stakeholders.
- Close collaboration should be ensured between the Professional Unions, the Strategic Headteacher, the GB and the Authority, to set a clear Staffing Strategy early in the process.
- Clear and completely open criteria should be established at the beginning of the appointment process so that no further ambiguity arises further on in the process.
- A better communication procedure should be established so that all stakeholders know what is happening (or what is not happening, which is as important).
- It should be realised that the threat of staff losing their jobs is a serious and traumatic matter, and this should be acknowledged and responded to.
- An apology should be conveyed to the former headteachers of the Dolgellau catchment area for what was noted.
- Ysgol Bro Idris should further develop the link between Y5/6 and Y7/8 over the coming years in order to develop the principle of the Donaldson Report/Bright Future more robustly, and better relate to the principles of an All-through School.

APPENDIX:

Sources of evidence:

1. Strategic Headteacher, Ysgol Bro Idris
2. The Chair of the Governing Body, Ysgol Bro Idris
3. The Chair of the staff Appointment Panel, Ysgol Bro Idris
4. Four Education Officers and Assistant Education Officer
5. Two Officers from the Human Resources Department, Gwynedd Council
6. Four former primary Headteachers in Y Gader catchment area
7. Chair of the Gwynedd Federation of Primary Headteachers
8. Three Teaching Unions Officers: NASUWT, NUT and UCAC
9. Ysgol Bro Idris Staff, including:
 - 9 letters;
 - 4 e-mails;
 - three informal interviews.
10. Y5 and Y6 pupils at three primary sites: Llanelltyd, Dolgellau and Rhydymain

Documents:

1. Documents and presentations by Gwynedd Officers
2. The Unions' letters to the Authority and the responses received
3. The Unions' letters to the Strategic Headteacher/ GB, Ysgol Bro Idris, and the responses received
4. GYDCA minutes 10.03.17 and 11.06.17
5. The Authority's letter to the Chair and Vice-chair of the Gwynedd Federation of Primary Headteachers.
6. The response of the Federation's Chair and Vice-chair to the Authority's letter.
7. E-mails sent between the Authority and the Representative of Y Gader catchment area's primary Headteachers.

I would like to thank all stakeholders for their willing cooperation as I gathered the evidence for this report.

Gareth Williams

CV Gareth Williams

2007 – Present

Independent Consultant operating across Wales supporting Authorities, schools, and individual headteachers.

Operate as an Independent Inspector with Estyn inspecting schools and Authorities.

2004-2007:

Chief Executive of Cynnal – A company that served Gwynedd and Anglesey Authorities' primary, special, and secondary schools

Specific responsibility::

- Chief Wxecutive of the Company
- Chief Consultant of the Company
- Chief inspector of the Company

1996-2004:

Primary Consultant with responsibility for over 52 primary schools in Anglesey.

Additional Responsibility: Team Leader for Management Development Gwynedd and Anglesey Authorities

1975-1996:

Headteacher of Beddgelert, Y Gorlan, Tremadog, ac Yr Hendre, Caernarfon primary schools.