



Annual Governors' Report to Parents 2023/4

Dear Parents/Carers

Outlined in this document is the Annual Governors' Report to Parents, which covers a broad range of items that we are required to provide on an annual basis. There will be a Parents' Meeting on Wednesday 3rd July 2024 at 2pm if you would like to discuss the report further. If you intend on joining us at the meeting, please could you email the school Office by Tuesday 2nd July 2024.

The last year has been a fabulous year for St Ethelwold's VA School with a lot to celebrate and take great pride in.

We have had several visits and reports from the Local Authority, The Diocese of St Asaph and GWE our regional authority congratulating us on the hard work and commitment that have identified. We are very proud of our achievements; the following are a flavour of the type of feedback we receive:

- Across the school, pupils' engagement in their learning and behaviour are good. The learning environments are calm and organised
- The maths work in pupils' workbooks is backed up with evidence on Seesaw that shows the wide range of practical learning experiences that build up to the pieces of more formal maths work in books
- Thank you for the opportunity to visit your Year 4,5 and 6s to see what they were doing as part of the School of Sanctuary project, it left me very inspired
- The school has a clear overview and plan to ensure diversity and respect for difference is in the fabric of the school.
- each class has been involved in curriculum experiences and have embraced the ideas of belonging in their school, community, and local areas with a plethora of school based and learning experiences outside the classroom

Whilst we are very proud of the achievements we have made not only this year but over the last few years we continue to work hard on ensuring the school is the best it can be in the future too. We would like to thank our staff, parents and children for their hard work in making St Ethelwold's VA School the outstanding school it is today.

Gary Cooper
Chair of Governors

Paul Oliver
Headteacher

Andy Griffith
Deputy Headteacher

THE GOVERNING BODY

Headteacher	Mr. Paul Oliver
Chair	Mr. Gary Cooper
Vice-Chair	Abigayil Miller
Clerk	Dr Lisa Peters
Correspondence	Head Teacher or Clerk

Appointed By	Appointment	Name	Date Elected	Valid Until
School	Headteacher Governor	Paul Oliver	01.09.08	Note 1
	Teacher Governor	Andy Griffith	01.04.24	31.03.28
	Staff Governor	Leanne Duggan	02.03.23	01.03.27
	Parent Governor	Anthony Cartwright	12.3.24	11.3.28
Flintshire County Council	LEA Governor	Gary Cooper	29.06.23	28.06.27
Shotton Town Council	Community Governor (minor authority)	Cllr Gillian Brockley	25.05.21	24.05.25
Borderlands Mission Area (MAC)	Foundation Parent Governor (1)	Abigayil Miller	12.3.24	11.3.28
	Foundation Parent Governor (2)	Vacant		
	Foundation Governor (1)	Alan Rainsforth	28.04.23	27.04.27
	Foundation Governor (2)	David Lloyd	20.3.22	19.03.26
	Foundation Governor (3)	Tim Byram	10.10.23	09.10.27
	Foundation Governor (4)	Vacant		
Ex-officio Members				
Governing Body	Clerk	Dr Lisa Peters	22.10.13	
Bishop	Incumbent	Rev. George Bearwood		Note 2

All correspondence for Governors, including Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk should be sent Care of St Ethelwolds VA School.

Future Parent Governors

At the end of a term of office for all Parent Governors, we will always inform all parents of the opportunity to put their name forward as a Governor.

The next opportunity will be June 2028.

- Parent Governors are nominated by and when appropriate elected by parents of pupils currently at school.
- Co-opted Governors are nominated by and when appropriate elected by all Governors except other Co-opted Governors.
- LA Governors are nominated by the local County Council.
- Staff Governors are nominated and when appropriate elected by members of staff.
- Minor Authority is nominated by the local Community Council, we are linked to Queensferry community council.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR APRIL 2023 TO MARCH 2024

Carry Forward from 2022/23	£1733
Total Budget for 2023/24	£460,607
Foundation Phase Grant	£29,404
WAG Grants	£54,374
Total Budget	
(inc. carry forward and all WAG grants inc. FP grant)	£546,118
Income	-£185,636
Costs 2023/24	
All staffing inc. Supply Costs	£522,743
Premises	£27,796
Supplies	£69,758
LEA Costs	£28,211
SEG/PDG Overspend	£0
Adult Meals / Link Courses	£2761
Travelling Expenses	£12
Totals Costs	£651,281

Carry Forward	-£5,038 *
WAVE4 ICT C/f	£1,110

- £17,319.60 is due from CRAMP funding which will result in a carry forward of £12,281.60

NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENTS

The Welsh Government no longer publishes the Core Data Packs for schools in Wales following the recommendations from Professor Donaldson. This is based on the increasing importance and focus upon the progress and value added for individual pupils as well as the year group. Currently this is also the focus now for Estyn, individual pupil progress.

In Wales we are now introducing a new curriculum. Our school continues to work very hard to plan the roll out of the new curriculum. A key aspect of the new curriculum is a review of assessment and recording procedures.

As a result, of this we are no longer able to report the school's performance and comparisons to other schools as we have in the past. We do however still have robust procedures and processes in place to monitor and track individual progress. We still hold ourselves to the highest standards in line with procedures of assessment in the past. We feel this is vital to maintain standards in our school in the future.

We are expecting further guidance from the Welsh Government as the new curriculum is rolled out in years to come.

ATTENDANCE

As parents you will all be very aware of the increasing focus upon attendance by both the Welsh Government and the Local Authority. As a result of this, all schools are under great pressure to improve their attendance data. This is important as good attendance is linked to good progress at school.

The target for the school and every child that attends school is 95%. Below this level is regarded as poor attendance.

Over the last few years children's attendance has been greatly reduced due to the pandemic. This trend of low attendance has continued with a large group of children with their attendance below the 95% target.

We all need to work hard to achieve the ultimate goal of achieving 95% attendance or better, both as individual children and as a school. Below are the targets we have put in place for the years ahead to achieve this goal.

We agree and set targets each year with the LA and our Education Welfare Officer. Progress towards these targets is monitored closely throughout the year.

2023/24 target 90% current actual 89.7%

2024/25 target 91%

2025/26 target 92%

We carefully scrutinise holiday leave of absence requests before authorising the leave. This has led to a growing number of requests being denied. In order to grant leave of absence requests, your child's attendance needs to be above 95% over a 2-year period. **(Please do not book your holiday before seeking leave of absence).**

As part of our school procedures we monitor attendance on a regular basis with the LA attendance officer. The LA are taking a firm line with attendance and are now issuing attendance letters which are part of a graduated response to eventual fines and prosecutions.

PUPILS LEAVING OUR SCHOOL IN YEAR 6

Destinations of Year 6 children in September 2024 -

Elfed High School	8
Connah's Quay High School	1
Argoed High School	1
Mold Alun	1
Maes Hyfryd	1

All of our local High Schools are of a very high quality and the feedback from parents is always very positive. Although we maintain close links with all the High Schools in our area, we are regarded as a feeder school to Hawarden High.

LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY

Our links with the community continue to grow. We have many long-standing links and are always looking to build new relationships and are now involved with a broad range of community events and local industries. They are outlined below: -

- **Hawarden High cluster of schools** - We have strengthened our links with not only **Hawarden High School**, but our consortium of primary schools. As teachers we work together on joint projects, many of which are led by our staff and continue to take part in a broad range of transition events which this year have included:
 - Coding Sessions
 - Formula 1 Workshop
 - Crime Scene Investigation Workshop
 - Humanities
- In recent years, more and more children have chosen to attend **Buckley Elfed High School** as their preferred High School. As a result of this we have developed much stronger links with The Elfed. This has included staff visiting each other's school to develop our knowledge and links and enhanced transition events for children. This ensures all children who do move to Buckley Elfed are very well supported.
- Fundraising - **The Senedd** (council of children) have been very active this year in driving forward our targets We have seen many events led by their enthusiasm. The Senedd is comprised of our 5 school councils – Cyngor Addolig Collective Worship), Digital Wizards, School Improvers, Criw Cymreig and Eco Council
- We have seen fundraising events for different charities and organisations. They are outlined below:

Royal British Legion, Food Bank collections, Children in Need, Comic Relief, Action for Children.

- **St Ethelwold's Church** – Since taking over from Father Steve, Father George Bearwood has developed very strong links with school. He attends regular assemblies and events. This link with the Church and community is having a significant impact on our children's wellbeing and attitudes to life. Father George is now an established Governor at our school which has again strengthened our links in our community. We are regular attenders of St Ethelwold's Church where Father George leads services for Harvest, Advent and Easter. Father George also attends school leavers' service to bless the pupils who are leaving on the next leg of their educational journey
- **North Wales Police** - We continue to maintain our links with North Wales Police who have supported school to cover a broad range of topics such as Drug Abuse, Anti Social Behaviour and Keeping Safe, which includes Internet Safety. In addition to this we work closely with our local Community Police Officers based at Deeside Police Station and have gone on Community Walks around the locality learn what we can do when we find litter, dog mess and graffiti. The partnership with NWP allows us to learn how to live in a safe and considerate community.
- **Airbus** - We continue to maintain our links with Airbus who have funded the renovation of our pond in school. This work has helped with local biodiversity with several species of newts and countless insects inhabiting the pond and allowing us to take a hands on look at local biodiversity. This has led to further partnerships with Airbus and future STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths) projects where we will use the facilities at Airbus.
- **Community Councils** - We continue to maintain excellent relationships with both Shotton and Hawarden Community Councils. We have received grants which we have used to purchase outdoor clothing, play equipment, plants and trees.
- **School Grounds** – In partnership with the Woodland Trust the school has planted over 100 trees. Children from Year 1 through to Year 6 have been involved in planting a broad range of trees that are native to our area. This is a project that will continue to develop over the next 10, 20 and even 30 years. It will be fantastic for the children to watch their own woodland grow and develop. The growth in the trees since planting has been outstanding. 90%+ of the trees we have planted are growing well.

This year we applied to be part of a LA environmental project. So far, we have had a native hedgerow planted alongside wildflowers.

We have seen the benefit of our pond restoration, funded by Airbus UK, and thoroughly enjoyed the pond dipping workshops for parents and pupils.

We continue to look for opportunities to link up with our school community and would welcome your ideas and contributions in the future.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES, TRIPS AND CLUBS ACTIVE PLAYTIMES AND LUNCHTIME

Every week the children spend over 6 hours of their school week at play on the playground. This has been a target of opportunity for us to develop our playtime to be active, fun and an enriching time of the day. We have a broad range of activities for the children to be involved in. These include tennis, hockey, crown green bowls netball, table tennis, and yoga to name but a few.

This not only keeps our children active, fitter, happy and busy but they are acquiring a huge range of new skills.

The addition of a canopy at the rear of the school and an outdoor classroom on the junior yard has enabled to take our learning outside even in poor weather.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

We really enjoyed our Christmas celebrations and Christmas party day. The children dressed up in their party clothes and we enjoyed dancing, playing pass the parcel, singing and eating party food. We were also very lucky that we had a special visitor who passed by to say hello.



STAY AND PLAY SESSIONS

As a setting, we now offer 'stay and play sessions' for our younger learners. These sessions provide a short session, with parents, which allows us the chance to discuss any concerns or health worries with the parents. These sessions are proving to be very beneficial for both children and parents, allowing the children to settle better and quicker and at their pace.

ROLLING SNACK

We now provide 'rolling snack' in Class 1 which allows the children to choose when to have their snack and serve themselves independently. Practitioners model how to use the snack area carefully, so that children know what to do, and, as a result, the children develop a wide variety of skills effectively. Children continue to learn about the importance of personal hygiene and are asked to wash their hands before they have their snack.



EISTEDDFOD

To celebrate St David's day, we had a week worth of activities that all children took part in towards our Eisteddfod. The children worked hard to ensure their work was to a high standard to then be judged by the teachers. We celebrated St David's day with the children coming into school wearing either traditional Welsh outfits or anything red. We had an afternoon that included a St David's day assembly where the children learnt all about who St David is and why we celebrate it on the 1st of March. We then continued with naming the winners of the competition where children were given prizes for their hard work.

HHS Transition

Throughout the year we take groups of Year 3,4,5,& 6 pupils to experience what it's like to learn in a High School environment. The activities are always fun, engaging and enjoyed by all.

WORLD BOOK DAY

To celebrate World Book Day this year the children came into school dressed up in their favourite character from their favourite book. They discussed their favourite book and then created a book review and gave explanations as to why they enjoy that book. Finally,



the children listened to a Welsh author who talked about himself and his book which deals with current issues. Following this, the children all created their own book token for a competition. The year 5 and 6 children had a visit from the reception classes, where they sat and read stories to the children, and shared their favourite books.



POLICY REVIEWS

To ensure the smooth running of the school, the Governors are responsible for reviewing and adopting School Policies. The responsibility to write and review these Policies lies with different Governors. Below is a QR code where you can access all of our school policies.

THE SCHOOL PROSPECTUS

The School Prospectus was updated in the summer term of 2023 to reflect the changes in staffing and the way we operate in school. Another review will be completed in the summer term of 2024.

SCHOOL TERM DATES & TRAINING DAYS - 2024 – 2025

Autumn Term

Monday 2nd September

Staff Training Day- not open to students

Tuesday 3rd September

School reopens

Friday 25th October

School closes for half-term 3.15pm

Monday 4th November

Staff Training Day- not open to students

Tuesday 5th November

School reopens

Friday 20th December

School closes for Christmas holiday 3.15pm

Spring Term

Monday 6th January

Staff Training Day- not open to students

Tuesday 7th January

School reopens

Friday 21st February

School closes for half-term 3.15pm

Monday 3rd March

School reopens

Friday 11th April

School closes for Easter holiday 3.15pm

Summer Term

Monday 28th April

Staff Training Day- not open to students

Tuesday 29th April

School reopens

Monday 5th May

School closed for bank holiday

Friday 23rd May

School closes for half-term 3.15pm

Monday 2nd June

School reopens

Thursday 17th July

School closes for summer holiday 3.15pm

Friday 18th July

Staff Training Day- not open to students

Monday 21st July

Staff Training Day- not open to students

**There may be changes to Staff Training Days in line with Welsh Government Guidance

School Improvement Plan 2023/2024

PRIORITY1: Leadership and Management Continue to develop leadership capacity at all levels to ensure robust self-evaluation and quality assurance processes.

Rationale:

- Key staff absence on the SLT has resulted in progress being slowed
- Governors' strategic leadership requires strengthening
- Dialogue with staff indicates that communication systems require strengthening
- Appraisal information has given the school indications of staff strengths

Progress -

The school has made good progress against this target. Changes in staff have led to the development of a strong and committed Senior Leadership Team comprising of:

- Headteacher Mr Paul Oliver
- Acting Deputy Headteacher Mr Andy Griffith
- ALNCo Mrs Rebecca Ellis

Senior Leadership members are clear in their roles and dedicated to securing further improvements in school performance.

Teaching and support staff are developing leadership capacity and successfully lead areas of the school

Communication is strong and has led to all staff being invested in school improvement

Governors have a much clearer knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development

PRIORITY 2: Curriculum for Wales Develop pupil voice so that pupils are influential in how and what they learn.

Rationale: As part of the ethos of our school we recognise that pupil voice should be integral to all that we do We recognise that teachers want to spend time talking to their pupils about their learning, progress and next steps We want pupils to play a more active role in the decision-making process We want pupils to engage more in the learning and teaching process – planning, assessment and reflection

Progress -

Progress in this area has been good.

The development of 5 school councils to form the senedd has ensured that pupils' voice is heard and acted upon.

All pupils contribute towards the planning process for all topics across the school.

Pupils' involvement in the feedback, marking and assessment for learning process leads to quantifiable and demonstrable improvements in pupils' learning

PRIORITY 3: Develop oracy so that standards in reading and writing continue to improve.

Rationale: Standards in reading and writing are improving but are not yet where they were pre covid. Pupils entering EE, Nursery and Reception have significantly weaker early language skills than pre covid

Progress -

Progress against this target is good

The increased range of oracy activities available to pupils in the earliest years allows them to acquire skills at an appropriate rate

Standards in reading are improving as evidenced by children's rate of progress through Read, Write Inc Groups and through improved standardised scores in Welsh National Tests.

Book scrutiny shows that standards in writing are continuing to rise across the school.

Pupils are increasingly able to write accurate extended pieces of writing with writing stamina improving continuously.

PRIORITY: Ensure that the school's Christian mission, vision, and values are integral to all aspects of the school's work.

Rationale: · The school is a Voluntary Aided school · Mission, vision and values have recently been updated · The school requires a new strapline

Progress -

Progress in this area is good.

The vision and values are visible around the school through posters, displays in each classroom and communal areas.

Behaviour and reward systems are based around the values and children have a strong understanding of the school's 4 core values

ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

'ALN is everybody's business'

All staff at St Ethelwold's VA School are working together to identify and plan support to meet the needs of your children. As parents, you are the experts on your children. It is so beneficial for your children that we continue to work together effectively and share our thoughts, knowledge and create plans for well-being and progress.

All pupils regardless of their ALN should have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Every child has their own life journey, experiences and needs. Our support changes all the time to meet the needs of the children we are working with at that moment in time. Their experiences at St Ethelwold's are designed to ensure that their wellbeing, social and emotional development is nurtured. We plan carefully to balance this on an individual

basis while providing the best quality teaching and learning opportunities to meet individuals educational progress.

Each child will usually, for the greatest part, be taught within his/her peer group. This is discussed on an individual basis and changes are common to meet the needs of the children in the moment. A child may spend some time in a small group or 1-1 situations to support them and help them to reach their potential. The child's thoughts and feelings are central to any plans for support.

We are very pleased with the way in which we are managing the transition to the new ALN Code and we continue to do so in a way that is right for the well-being of our families while meeting the requirements of the new ALN Code.

Mrs Ellis has jumped into the role of ALNCo with energy and the skills to do a fantastic job. Mrs Ellis also manages the IT System 'ECLIPSE' that we have been directed to use by Flintshire LA to meet requirements of the new ALN Code. Miss Dace and Mrs Maguire work as part of our ALN team to support the delivery of ALN provision through school. Your children's class teacher and Teaching Assistant should always be your first points of contact as they know your children best.

The new ALN Code in Wales remains in a transitional period. This has now been extended until August 2025. Most pupils in St Ethelwold's will have been converted by August 2024 unless it is helpful for them to remain on the old system longer. We are directed by the Welsh Government as to which pupils in which year groups can be converted to the new code in which time frame. We are directed by the new ALN code who does meet criteria for ALN under the new code and who does not. If your child had an IEP on the old system and doesn't have ALN as per the new ALN code, this should not affect the support they get in school. Most children on IEPs will have their needs met under the schools Universal Provision and via targeted support strategies. This does not require a formal plan under the new system. However, we will still be supporting your child and in most cases, they will still have targets they are working towards that we will share with you.

St Ethelwold's Universal Provision and targeted support may include some 1-1 or small group intervention and lots of differentiation in class. Alternatively, we may determine that a child has ALN as per the new code and they will have an Individual Development Plan. These pupils require Additional Learning Provision that we can not provide for all. This will include frequent and consistent support that is different to that of what we can provide for most pupils. This work is coordinated by the school's ALNCO in discussion and support with the child, Senior Leadership Team, class staff, parents and any agencies involved in the child's development.

We work with families on an individual basis to discuss, and plan effective support. We continue to work with the LA and our local cluster closely during this transitional period. All Staff and Governors have undertaken training of the new code and the person-centred approaches that underpin it.

Access to support from outside is extremely challenging. Services and budgets are stretched. We continue to work hard to access the right support for each individual child. We work regularly with our LA learning advisor and the LA Educational Psychologist. We refer directly to a variety of outside agencies as helpful including CAMHS, the Neuro Developmental Team, speech and Language Service, Early Help Hub. We also work with our school nurse to access Health services. When outside agencies do become involved, they are very complimentary of the support we have already been providing as a school and our capacity and ability to support the ALN of our children following their advice.

Staff are always keen to learn. We take part in lots of training opportunities. This enables us to continue to develop professionally in any area of ALN that is helpful for our children at that time. This may focus on Cognitive development, Physical development, Medical or Sensory development, Communication and Interaction skills, Social, Emotional and Behavioural development.

St Ethelwold's VA School will work with all families to try to meet the needs of every child that attends our school regardless of their disability to ensure they are not treated less favourably than other children.

LANGUAGE CATEGORY

Although there are a broad range of languages spoken in school such as Polish, Bulgarian and Lithuanian, our main language is English with Welsh being taught as a second language.

We embrace and celebrate all languages spoken in our school, our EAL population has grown steadily over several years. They are now a sizable minority within our school. We now have many different home countries represented in our school.

Welsh is taught throughout the school as a second language with all our pupils. This is often done via staff as incidental Welsh in all lessons with instructions from staff, requests from pupils, answering the register or playing games at break times.

e.g. Can I go to the toilet? – Ga i fynd i'r toiled?
Listen carefully - Gwrandewch
Stand up - Sefwch
Sit down - Eisteddwch

This is reinforced via daily Helpwr Heddiw lessons led by the pupils.

The core content of the lessons is taught in English as this is our first language for nearly all of our pupils. This approach to Welsh is very similar to what the children will experience at our local High Schools. Any pupils who transfer to the County Welsh speaking High School can attend an immersion course in the final half term of Year 6 for 6 weeks.

TOILET FACILITIES

They are all bright, well maintained and private facilities for our pupils to use. The toilets are re-painted and maintained to a high standard. They are thoroughly cleaned by the end of each day by our cleaning/caretaking staff to a very high standard. They are monitored throughout the day by senior staff for any issues that may need attention.

Our caretaker Mr Small continues to maintain all toilets to a high standard and will be working through a scheme of refurbishment.

We have disabled toilet facilities and the ratio of toilets to pupils meets all relevant requirements.

PERIOD DIGNITY RESOURCES

The Governing body is committed to period dignity for all children at St Ethelwold's. The school provides open access to free period products within school and pupils are signposted to support through educational sessions with Miss Bow. Our older learners are provided with care packs and free supplies are offered prior to any school holiday.

HEALTHY EATING, WATER AND SCHOOL MEALS

Our school meals are provided by Newydd Catering Service. They follow the Welsh Government Appetite for Life Action Plan aimed at improving the nutritional standards in all meals. The school was also awarded a 5 Star Food Hygiene Rating on inspection of the school kitchen facilities.

In addition to this, children are only allowed to have a fruit snack in school during breaks. They are only allowed to drink water, no fruit juices or cordials. Children can top up their water throughout the day at water stations. The water stations supply fresh water that is filtered and chilled.

We encourage all children to bring their own water bottles with enough water to last them the day.

The school's breakfast club was also run by the school. The children can access a broad range of breakfast choices including cereal, toast, crumpets, waffles, tea cakes to name but a few.

Consultation

If you would like to discuss any of the contents of the report with the Chair of Governors please contact the school office to arrange an appointment.