

Annual report to parents September 2023 - August 2024

Letter from the Chair of Governors

On behalf of the Governing body at Darland High School I am pleased to introduce our Governors' Report to Parents. This gives me the opportunity to outline a summary of the responsibilities of the Governing Body and information on the life of our school, outcomes and achievements.

An unfortunate accident resulted in our Headteacher, Mrs Lee, requiring surgery and a period of recuperation. The Governing Body is grateful to Mr Clarkson who deftly took on the role of Acting Headteacher during Mrs Lee's absence.

The summer examinations saw a pleasing set of GCSE results with 98% of our students achieving at least one qualification. We're incredibly proud of the truly outstanding results of our Art and Textiles departments where 100% of students achieved grades A to C. In addition, our PE faculty saw 98% of students rewarded for their hard work with grades of C or above.

The school implemented a financial plan to reduce the budget deficit for the financial year 2023/24. Due to significant budget reductions across Wrexham Council, we have had to put in place a revised, three year budget recovery plan from April 2024.

Governors are working alongside our leadership team to ensure that students continue to benefit from a varied and quality curriculum. We're excited to be working in partnership with Wrexham Youth Academy and put into action the many opportunities this brings for our students and our Darland Learning Community.

Finally I want to thank you, our parents and carers, for your support and willingness to work in partnership with us. This support helps us establish and maintain high standards as well as ensures that all of our pupils can achieve their full potential.

Feedback on the information contained in this report would be most welcomed.

Elaine Lacey

Chair of Governors

1. Introduction

This report is prepared annually by the governing body with the purpose of informing parents and other stakeholders about the performance and management of the school over the preceding academic year. As a vibrant learning organisation with 775 students and well over 100 members of staff, a report such as this can only provide basic headline information on the school's activities and as such, the report is organised under headings denoting the statutory content as set out by Welsh Government. Further information about the activities of the school can be obtained from the following sources:

- School website www.darland.wrexham.sch.uk
- Governors meeting minutes are available on request from the clerk to the Governing body who can be contacted at clerk.governor@darlandschool.org.uk
- <https://mylocalschool.gov.wales/> - provides statistics against benchmarks on the performance of the school.

2. Parents meeting relating to this report

As per the regulations, no formal meeting of parents with governors will be held following the publication of this report, unless the parents / carers of at least 5% of the pupils write in to request that such a meeting is convened.

3. Information about the arrangements for the next election of parent governors.

The next parent governor elections will take place as and when vacancies arise.

4. Summary of the KS4 school results for 2024

Capped 9 measure	
A school average of the total points attached to the top nine GCSEs, or equivalent qualifications, for each learner. The top nine must include the following five grades: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maths• Numeracy• The best two Science grades achieved• English Literature	363

Indicator	Measure	Attainment (% of pupils)
Level 2 inclusive threshold	Attained a minimum of five GCSEs, or equivalent, at grade A*-C including English and Maths	58%
Level 2 threshold	Attained minimum of five GCSEs, or equivalent, at grade A*-C	70%
Level 1 threshold	Attained a minimum of five GCSEs, or equivalent, at grade A to G	98%
Grade A* and A	Attained at least five GCSE grade A* or A, or equivalent	17%

Performance by subject - % of pupils attaining grade A* to C	
Core subjects	
English	65
English Literature	79
Maths Numeracy	67
Maths	65
Science	75
Cymraeg	38
Option subjects	
Art	100
French	83
Hospitality and Catering	63
Geography	55
History	57
Digital Technology	37
Media Studies	54
PE	98
Product Design	52
Photography	50
Textiles	100
Sociology	52

Skills Challenge Certificate
68% of the 143 students entered for Skills Challenge achieved their certificate.

5. Overview of provision made for pupils to participate in sport, including extra-curricular activities

Sporting Achievements

Football

Years 7 -10 boys and girls teams were involved in the Welsh Cup football fixtures during the autumn term with varying results. U13 and U15 girl's football teams had a great run in the competition, reaching the third round for the U15's and the National rounds for the U13's. Several friendly games were arranged during the year, including our annual matches at the Kings School, Chester.

Netball

We had plenty of netball success during the year, regular inter-Wrexham school fixtures were played as well as the County Wrexham Tournaments for all year groups. Years 7-9 all won the Wrexham County Tournament, a superb achievement for the girls taking part. A number of our year 9 and year 11 girls were also selected to represent Wrexham and North East Wales at the NEWales and Wales National Competition.

Cross Country

In November, 40 of Darland's students went to Ruabon High School for the annual cross-country event. We had some outstanding performances with two race winners (Year 10 and Year 9) and 14 runners qualifying in the top 10 all who progressed on to the Wrexham team.

Cricket

Our u13's and u15's girls teams had an opportunity once again to enter the North East Wales and North Wales Cricket competitions. U15's made it through to the Chance to Shine North England

softball regional finals in Manchester, successfully beating teams across North Wales.

Rounders

In June, we hosted the annual Year 7 and Year 8 Wrexham school's rounders competition. Our Year 7's placed 3rd and Year 8's finished in 1st place. The following week our Year 9's came runners up in a very competitive tournament and Year 10's finished a respectable 4th out of 8.

Athletics

Years 9 and 11 performed in the Wrexham schools athletics meet in September, with a few individuals winning their event. Our U15 boys and U13 girls athletics teams qualified from the Wrexham school's competition and represented their county at the North East Wales round competing against Flintshire and Denbighshire. We're proud of the achievement of a Year 9 student who was selected for the Welsh U15 athletics team in middle distance events. Years 7 and 8 also took part in the Wrexham athletics Championships, all placing 4th.

Darland Championships

The department hosted its first Cricket and Rounders Championships for years 7-10. Each year group had an inter-form competition, all pupils thoroughly enjoyed participating and spectating. An event we'd like to host annually!

Leadership in PE

Chester Marathon - Every October our GCSE students give up their time early on a Sunday morning to help with the drinks station for the Chester marathon. As well as issuing water, where it was needed, they support and encourage the runners to keep on going!

Open Evening - A number of our pupils linked to our leadership roles (Sports Captain, Bronze Ambassadors and Sports Leaders) did a fantastic job during the open evening of leading sporting displays, competitions and tests in the sports hall, with a number of parents stating how impressed they were with the conduct and enthusiasm they displayed in helping prospective youngsters in the various activities on offer.

Sports Captain - Four of our Year 11's were successful in becoming our Sports Captains for the academic year, supporting the department with competitions, events and festivals.

Gold Ambassador - A Year 10 pupil was successful in completing the Gold Ambassador accreditation. A Gold Ambassador is a youth leadership movement aimed at developing the future leaders of Wales through sport and physical activity. Young Ambassadors will use their role to influence, lead and mentor within schools.

Bronze Ambassador - Year 9's had the opportunity to apply for one of 10 places to train as Bronze Ambassadors, an accreditation overseen by Active Wrexham. The Ambassadors were very busy over the year, leading and supporting primary school football and cricket festivals with our feeder schools. They also supported the department with extra-curricular activities and the 'Darland Championships' by organizing teams and running the activities.

School Sport Extra Curricular

- Cricket
- Interform
- Futsal
- Fitness Suite

- Badminton
- Netball
- Football/Netball Fixture
- Girls Football with Wrexham FC
- Basketball
- 5-a-side

Revision and other Extra Curricular

- Art Club
- Digital Technology Coursework Catchup
- Drama Club
- Language Club
- Maths Homework and questions help
- Maths Revision
- Photography Club
- Pride Club
- School Band
- Science Clinic - Students attend with specific areas they want tutoring in
- Singers' Club
- STEM Club – an opportunity to do experiments and investigations and to work towards the CREST award
- Urdd Club
- Warhammer Club

6. Details of the members of governing body (including the name and address of the chair and clerk to the governing body)

Details of the members of the current governing body can be found on the school website - [Governors - Darland High School](#)

Governing Body as at September 2023

Chair of Governors: Elaine Lacey

Vice-Chair of Governors: Mr Bob Chowdhury

Clerk to the governors: Helen Holland - email Clerk.Governor@darlandschool.org.uk

Working Group Chairs

Cllr Rob Walsh (Chair Standards and Achievement Working Party)
 Bob Chowdhury (Chair Finance, Staffing and Premises Working Party)
 Ian Edwards (Chair Student and Staff Wellbeing Working Party)

Kay Andrew
 Chris Cheffings
 David Davies
 Tina Dop
 Cllr Hugh Jones
 Mark Mackie (Co-Optee)
 Michelle McLean
 Stuart McLeod-Andrew
 Rob Ratcliffe
 Ines Roberts
 Tim Segasby
 Mark Smith (Co-Optee)
 Louise Todd
 Edward Winterbottom

Contact details for Chair of Governors
 Email enquiries@darlandschool.org.uk

7. The financial statement of 2023-24, outlining school income and expenditure; including the section 52 statement provided by the local authority and summary of how the school's budget was used.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL EXPENDITURE STATEMENT 2023-2024 Financial Year 1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024

Budget Heading	Budget (£)	Outturn (£)	Surplus/(Deficit) (£)
Employees	4,767,817	4,882,207	-114,390
Premises	285,175	342,653	-57,478
Transport	16,700	16,641	59
Supplies and Services	360,641	299,323	61,318
Agency	195,630	249,523	-53,893
Income	-592,758	-727,762	135,004
Contingency	-203,304	0	-203,304
TOTAL	4,829,901	5,062,585	-232,684

No gifts or hospitality were recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register and no travel or subsistence was paid to any member of the governing body.

8. Destination of School Leavers

Following their GCSE results, the majority of pupils have secured either a place at Coleg Cambria or moved on to alternative institutions or pathways to continue their education or training.

9. Community Links 2023-24

In a busy year of community focussed activities, Darland has been proactively supporting Rossett and the wider Wrexham community.

At the start of the term Darland staff and students participated in the Gresford colliery 89th anniversary commemoration which took place at the Miners Wheel, Pandy. In November our senior prefects and staff participated in Remembrance Services in both Rossett and Wrexham.

The annual St David's Day parade in Wrexham was enthusiastically supported by our Year 8 students. In June, students and staff attended the D-Day 80th anniversary commemoration service and march held in Wrexham marking the poignant anniversary of one of the most important events in recent history.

At the end of the term, former St Peter's School students eagerly conspired to host a surprise 'farewell and thank you' retirement celebration for Headteacher Mrs Helen Pritchard. One of our talented musicians, a former pupil of St Peter's, sang at the hugely enjoyable and emotional service held at Christ Church, Rossett.

Darland's support for local charities continued and in October students collected a whopping 421 kg of food for the Wrexham Food Bank, followed up later in the year with a collection for [The Food Cupboard for Rossett](#). Also in October our students once again expertly managed the Darland Lane drinks station for the MBNA Chester Marathon.

The autumn term ended on a high with our annual Skills Challenge activity for Year 10 students. Their tempting and innovative Christmas Fayre stalls successfully raised over £1,900 for Hope House Children's Hospices.

Other charitable activities during the year included supporting BBC Children in Need and Comic Relief.

We're very pleased to be able to support community use of the school facilities and notably our Yr 7 students hosted the Rossett Community Cafe in the school hall. In February the fantastic [Darland Community Theatre](#) put on a production of 'Educating Rita' and we welcomed the annual BRHS flower show in August.

Volunteering opportunities are an important part of Darland giving back to our community. In December two Darland students who are members of the [AVOW Young Influencers](#) group, allocated funds for emergency bags and Christmas presents to be delivered to the Info Shop, Wrexham in support of young homeless people in Wrexham. Another student volunteer working with the Learning Curve community engagement project, was praised for his leadership and teamwork whilst transforming outdoor space for Hillbury Care Home.

For many students volunteering begins at Darland with their participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Every year dozens of our students go out into our community and work as volunteers, following their interests and building confidence and skills.

Six students, who have been regularly volunteering at the wonderful community woodland [Maes Y Pant](#) Gresford, have recently been recognised in the national Green Flag (green spaces) Volunteer of the Year awards, winning in the youth volunteer category.

Da iwan pawb.

10. Policies reviewed and/or passed by the governing body

Policies are renewed every two years, except for the following which are every year:

ALN

Assessment & Target setting policy

Pay

Performance Management

Safeguarding

Policies adopted in 2023-24

September 2023

Framework of Responsibility (amended)

ALN Policy (amendments ongoing)

Assessment and Target Setting Policy

(renewal) Performance Management Policy

(amended) Safeguarding Policy (amended)

Staff Pay Policy (amended)

Behaviour Policy ((amended)

November 2023

ALN (amended)

Assessment and Target Setting Policy (amended)

Attendance Policy (amended)

Behaviour Policy (amended)

Counter Fraud Policy and Procedures

Educational Visits Policy

Looked After Children Policy (amended)

Lockdown and Shelter Policy

Probation Policy

Pupil Restraint Policy (amended)

School Teachers Pay and Conditions Policy

Uniform Policy (amended)

February 2024

Accessibility Policy (amended)

Charging Policy (amended)

Curriculum Policy (amended)

Literacy Policy (amended)

Redeployment & Redundancy Policy (renewal)

Rewards Policy (amended)

Sex & Relationships Policy (amended)

Transport Policy (amended)

May 2024

Behaviour Policy (amended)

Strategic Equalities Policy (amended)

July 2024
Anti-Bullying Policy (deferred)
Continuous Professional Development
Policy Healthcare Needs Policy (amended)
Parent and Visitor's Conduct Policy
Sex & Relationships Education Policy (amended)
Staff Absence Management Policy
Staff Capability Policy
Staff Dignity at Work Policy
Staff Recruitment and Appointment Policy
Behaviour for Learning Policy (amended)
ICT Policy

11. Term dates (including half term holidays) for 2024-2025

The latest school term dates can be found on the website by clicking on the following link [Term Dates 2024/2025 - Darland High](#)

12. School prospectus

The latest school prospectus can be found on the website by clicking on the following link [School Prospectus](#)

13. The use of the Welsh language in the school by pupils of all age groups.

Although Darland is an English medium school, very close to the English border, the school prides itself on actively promoting an affinity for Welsh culture and the use of conversational Welsh in lessons other than Welsh itself. In addition, teachers greet classes in Welsh, registers are answered in Welsh and many signs around the school are bilingual.

The Welsh department organises an annual residential visit to Glan Llyn for pupils in Year 8, where pupils participate in outdoor and adventurous activities, instructed through the medium of Welsh.

14. Toilet facilities at the school for pupils registered at the school and the arrangements in place for cleaning such toilet facilities.

There are three areas for boy's toilet facilities and three areas for girl's toilet facilities in the school buildings. There are two areas for boy's toilet facilities in the sports hall and two areas for girl's toilet facilities. The toilets are open all day and are cleaned every evening after school and at regular intervals throughout the day. All facilities are monitored throughout the day (CCTV monitors communal spaces i.e. sink/entrance) and any problems are dealt with as they occur.

15. Action taken to promote healthy eating and drinking by pupils of the school.

Health and wellbeing is vitally important and we strive to ensure that the school environment is safe, happy and inclusive.

The school has for some years run and managed its own catering service which is fully compliant with Welsh Government regulations on healthy eating. The 'Appetite for Life' programme is observed when designing menus. Hot and cold options have been expanded in response to student voice and feedback. Fresh water is available at fountains in different parts of the school.

Healthy eating and drinking is promoted through lessons in the following subjects: PE, Science and PSE. In the latter, all pupils participate on at least one occasion over the year in a half day of activities aimed at sharing successful strategies for health and wellbeing.

16. A summary of the school development plan (PIAP) prepared by the governing body for 2023-2024

The 2023-2024 School Development Plan focused on 4 areas:

*1. To enhance effective **Questioning and Feedback***

- Progress of students is supported by focused questioning and feedback approaches across the school.
- Best practice relating to questioning and feedback is regularly shared through CPD opportunities throughout the school year. Supporting consistent and effective approaches whilst keeping teaching and learning at the heart of the school and considering teacher workload.
- Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT) is embedded within learning plans and this time is sacrosanct as a part of the learning process at Darland.
- As a result of effective questioning and feedback, students are equipped to learn independently both in and outside of the classroom.

*2. To improve opportunities for **Personal Development***

- Increased student participation and engagement in leadership opportunities allow students throughout the Darland Learning Community in all years to develop leadership skills.
- Creation of a positive and inclusive school culture across the Darland Learning Community, where staff and student voice is valued.
- Further development of the wider curriculum leading to demonstrated growth in student confidence, communication abilities, and decision-making skills across the Darland Learning Community.
- Sustained student-led initiatives and community engagement projects that make a positive impact across the Darland Learning Community and beyond the school walls.

*3. To embed the learning and language of the **Curriculum for Wales***

- The language of learning, the four purposes, is effectively embedded across all subject areas, evident in learning plans, classroom instruction, and assessment practices.
- Darland students demonstrate an increased engagement with the curriculum, actively participating in learning activities, reflecting the development of their skills and their contributions to the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales.
- Darland fosters a positive and inclusive learning environment, where students and staff feel valued, supported. Students understand and can articulate why the four purposes are important.
- Parents, Carers, and the wider Darland Community are engaged and informed about the language of learning and its alignment with the four purposes, supporting the school's efforts in embedding the New Curriculum for Wales.

*4. To promote **outstanding behaviour, and positive attitudes to learning***

- Enhance and embed the systems for encouraging positive attitudes to learning.
- Support classroom behaviours and reduce fixed term exclusions.
- Ensure tutoring is developed and the role of the tutor is appreciated as one of the key links in the progress of students.
- Improve communication so that students, staff, parents and governors are aware of expectations for Darland students within our School Community.

