

Annual report to parents September 2024 - August 2025

Introduction

On behalf of Darland High School I am pleased to introduce the 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.

We celebrated another year of improving results with every year 11 student achieving qualifications in English and mathematics. The Science faculty results were outstanding with 100% of students securing A-C grades in Biology and Physics, and 96% in Chemistry.

During 2024/25 the school undertook an extensive structural and curriculum review that resulted in a business case for change. This was approved by governors and implemented during 2024/25 and we are continuing to work closely with the local authority to manage the projected budget deficit whilst continuing to deliver high quality outcomes for our students.

I want to thank you, our parents and carers, for your support and willingness to work in partnership with us. This approach helps us establish and maintain high standards and ensures that every student is understood and all are helped to achieve their potential.

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

Elaine Lacey

Community Governor

November 2025

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 682 students and just under 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 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.

Details of meetings with parents and carers

No parents/carers petitioned for a meeting with the governing body following the publication of the 2023 - 2024 Governors annual report to parents.

Performance information - attendance and summer 2025 exam results

Attendance

Attendance continued to recover post-pandemic and rose to 90.1% in 2025 (data available from mylocalschool.gov.uk).

Summary of the KS4 school results for 2025 (summer exam results)

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	360.7

Indicator	Measure	Attainment (% of students)
Grade A* and A	Attained at least five GCSE grade A* or A, or equivalent	21.7%
Grade A* to C	Attained at least five GCSE grade A* to C or equivalent	67.4%

Performance by subject - % of students attaining grade A* to C	
Core subjects	
English	65.9
English Literature	79.0
Maths Numeracy	70.3
Maths	68.8
Science	73.2
Cymraeg	43.4
Option subjects	
Additional maths	88.9
Art	94.4
French	76.9
Geography	65.4
History	56.9
Digital Technology	65.0
Media Studies	60.0
PE	95.7
Product Design	42.6
Photography	52.2
Textiles	53.8
Sociology	46.2

Skills Challenge Certificate
71.8% of students entered for Skills Challenge achieved their certificate

Destination of School Leavers

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

Curriculum

Detailed curriculum information can be found on the website - [curriculum](#).

At Key Stage 3, the curriculum ensures coverage of core subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science and Welsh (as a second language) alongside a wide range of foundation subjects including Modern Foreign Languages, Humanities, Expressive Arts, Technology and Physical Education, tailored to build skills progressively each year.

At Key Stage 4, all students follow a core programme including English Language and Literature, Mathematics, Science, Welsh, Skills Challenge and Physical Education, with the opportunity to choose from a range of optional subjects to suit their interests and career aspirations, including Art, Textiles, Product Design, French, Drama, Geography, History, ICT and more. The curriculum is further enriched by the Welsh Baccalaureate, which develops personal and real-world skills to ensure learners are well prepared for life beyond school.

Darland High School is committed to ensuring all students are able to access and benefit from its curriculum. A structured Additional Learning Needs (ALN) policy underpins the school's inclusive approach, recognising that some students require additional support to make progress. Staff across the school share responsibility for supporting pupils with ALN by differentiating teaching, using tailored strategies and by closely monitoring progress.

Where needed, Individual Development Plans are used to plan, implement and review personalised support in partnership with pupils and parents.

The Resource Provision, for learners with specific needs such as dyslexia and social communication needs, has specialist staff and teaching assistants working collaboratively with classroom teachers to adapt learning and provide targeted support.

Whilst only a small percentage of learners have English as an Additional Language (EAL), arrangements are in place to ensure students receive appropriate language support to access the curriculum supported by school staff and the Wrexham EAL Service when required.

We recognise the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on learning and wellbeing and governors target the pupil development grant to support students eligible for free school meals (FSM). As at September 2024, 9% of pupils were eligible for free school meals.

Summary and evaluation of the school development plan 2024-2025

1. To provide all students at Darland with a consistent and inspiring learning experience, The School Development Plan for 2024-2025 reflects sustained progress across all three priority areas, building effectively on the successes and learning from the previous cycle. The school has continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the consistency and quality of teaching, with significant developments in oracy, modelling techniques, and the use of learning-focused success criteria. Evidence gathered through quality assurance processes- including the whole-school GwE review in Term 1 and ongoing Reviews of Learning, shows that structured oracy activities are now embedded in many lessons, supporting students to articulate ideas with increasing confidence and engage more readily in higher-order thinking. Likewise, the renewed emphasis on modelling has contributed to deeper conceptual understanding, with student feedback indicating improved clarity when tackling complex tasks. These developments are feeding directly into curriculum planning and lesson design for 2024–2025, ensuring continued momentum in teaching and learning. The learning from this priority has informed the Quality Assurance approach for the 25-26 academic year, with Faculty Reviews timetabled throughout each term.

2. To ensure all students and staff at Darland receive outstanding care, support, provision for well-being, care, and support has strengthened over the year, and the enhancement of the Form Tutor role has helped create a more purposeful and positive start to the school day. This has contributed to improved readiness for learning and a reduction in early-morning behaviour concerns. Further refinement of Form Time routines remains an area for development - supported by the revised pastoral structure introduced in September 2025.

Collaboration with cluster primary schools has also broadened, improving transition processes and fostering greater curricular alignment. The focus on developing key skills - literacy, numeracy, and digital competence - continues to evolve, and with three dedicated Skills Coordinators now in post for 2025–2026, there is strong potential to deepen and strengthen this work across all Areas of Learning and Experience.

3. To embed the positive ethos of Darland for students, staff, parents, and the community, leadership and strategic planning have played a central role in driving whole-school improvement. Staff have engaged positively with professional development opportunities, particularly those related to data literacy, which has led to more informed planning and increasingly precise interventions. This has supported a developed culture of reflective, evidence-informed practice and strengthened the alignment between departmental and whole-school priorities, ensuring that this year's learning will shape and refine the priorities for 2025–2026. The school's careful financial oversight and ongoing curriculum review have ensured that resources continue to be deployed strategically, enabling Darland to maintain high-quality teaching and adapt effectively to external pressures such as WJEC GCSE reforms and reductions in staffing.

Overall, the SDP demonstrates that Darland High School has enjoyed a successful year of development, characterised by collaborative effort. The strategies introduced have helped develop staff confidence, and the coherence of whole-school systems. With strong foundations now in place, the school is well-positioned to continue its trajectory of improvement in the coming year

The use of the Welsh language in the school by students 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 students in Year 8, where students participate in outdoor and adventurous activities, instructed through the medium of Welsh.

The annual Eisteddfod is a valued part of our school curriculum. For the first time we welcomed the Darland Learning Community (our cluster primary schools) to join us in this friendly celebration of Welsh culture where students take to the stage to perform in song and recitation competitions. Further prizes were awarded for work inspired by curriculum subjects including history, geography and science, with entries showcasing skills such as photography, cooking and art.

Term dates (including half term holidays) for 2025-2026

The latest school term dates can be found on the website by clicking on the following link [2025/2026 term dates](#).

School prospectus

The school prospectus is currently being updated, please contact the school if you require a copy.

Financial statement

Summary financial expenditure statement 2024 - 2025, financial year 1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025.

	Budget (£)	Outturn (£)	Surplus/(Deficit) (£)
Employees	4,783,225	4,891,720	-108,495
Premises	346,908	277,639	69,269
Transport	14,332	9,767	4,565
Supplies and Services	257,831	260,335	-2,504
Agency	256,804	303,153	-46,349
Income	-217,185	-306,393	89,208
Contingency	-707,639	0	-707,639
TOTAL	4,734,276	5,436,219	-701,943

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.

Overview of provision of toilet facilities and the arrangements for cleaning

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.

Overview of provision made for students to participate in sport, including extra-curricular activities

Sporting Achievements

Football

Years 7 -11 boys teams and U15's girls team were involved in the Welsh Cup football fixtures during the autumn term with varying results. The u15 girl's football teams had a great run in the competition, reaching the fourth round of the cup. The year 8 Boys team also reached the fourth round, with the other teams being eliminated in the earlier rounds. Both the girls and boys played in several friendly games 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. Year 7 finished 6th, and year 8, 9, and 10 all finished second in the Wrexham County Tournament, a superb achievement for the girls taking part. Year 11 also placed second in the annual Ann Smart Competition in Wrexham, which was their last Netball tournament for Darland. 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.

Rugby

We were able to access external coaching this year for some KS3 boys and girls, this then resulted in an entry into The Wrexham Area Rugby Competition, the girls who had never even played Rugby before finished third in the county, which was a brilliant result for the team who had very little experience.

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. Eight of our students made it to the all Wales competition, with a few of the boys running a 4500m course in under 16minutes. Another male student ran a course of 5,790m in 18minutes.

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. The u15's made it through to the Chance to Shine North England softball regional finals in Manchester, successfully beating teams across North Wales, becoming North Wales and North East England U15's Champions.

Rounders

In June, we organised the annual year 7 and year 8 Wrexham school's rounders competition. Our year 7's placed 5th and year 8's finished in 1st place. The following week both our year 9 and year 10 teams were victorious, winning the overall Wrexham competition.

Athletics

Years 9 and 11 performed in the Wrexham schools athletics meet in September, with a few individuals winning their event. Our u13 girls and boys 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 number of our year 9 and year 11 students, who also placed first at Wrexham level, they then represented the county at North East Wales and a few even gained a place on the NEWales team to complete a Welsh level.

Sports Day

Sports Day was a huge success at Queensway this year, the students really appreciated competing at Queensway and the atmosphere was superb. Due to the access of an appropriate facility, a number of students broke school records, some that had stood for almost 30 years. The day was a huge success due to the support of our year 10 and year 11 students – they helped run and score on all of the events.

Leadership in PE

Chester Marathon - In 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 students linked to our leadership roles (Sports Captain, Bronze 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.

Sports Leaders- Thirteen of our year 9 students were successful in completing the Sports Ambassador accreditation, which is 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 inter-forms by organising teams and running the activities.

School Sport Extra Curricular

- Cricket
- Interform
- Fitness Suite
- Badminton
- Netball
- Football/Netball Fixture
- Girls Football
- 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

Wrexham Youth Academy Partnership

Over the 2024 summer break, the partnership moved forward with the installation of two temporary modular units alongside starting substantial groundwork improvements to the school field that are enhancing quality and usability. The works included the levelling, reseeding and marking out of multiple pitches. During the 2025 summer break, groundwork improvement work continued, focussing on upgrading drainage systems.

Community Links 2024-25

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 90th 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.

Darland continued to support local causes and in October our students once again expertly managed the Darland Lane drinks station for the MBNA Chester Marathon.

In April Darland hosted the first-ever Darland Cluster Eisteddfod, bringing together primary schools from across the community for a day of culture, creativity and cyfeillach (friendship/camaraderie).

The autumn term ended on a high with our annual Skills Challenge activity for year 10 students. All monies raised by these enterprising young people is donated to 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, in particular [Darland Community Theatre](#) and in August we welcomed the annual BRHS flower show.

Governing Body information

Details of the members of the various current committees are available on the school website - [working group committees](#) and other [committees](#).

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

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

Details of the members of the Governing Body as at September 2024

Chair of Governors: Elaine Lacey - Community

Vice-Chair of Governors: Tim Segasby - Parent

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

Working Group Committee Chairs

Cllr Rob Walsh (Chair Standards and Achievement Working Party)- Local Authority (LA)

Tim Segasby (Chair Finance, Staffing and Premises Working Party)

Ian Edwards (Chair Student and Staff Wellbeing Working Party) - LA

Governors as at September 2024

Kay Andrew - LA

Carl Postle - Parent

David Davies -LA

Emma Davies - Parent

Cllr Hugh Jones - LA
Mark Mackie -Teacher
Michelle McLean- Staff
Rob Ratcliffe - LA
Sarah Ward - Parent
Louise Todd - Community
Ines Roberts - Community
Alex Preston - Parent

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

Policies reviewed and/or passed by the governing body and summary of main changes

Policies are renewed every two years, except for the following which are every year: ALN, Assessment & Target Setting, Pay, Performance Management, Safeguarding

Policies adopted in 2024-2025

September 2024

Framework of Responsibility

CCTV Policy

Child Protection Policy

Data Protection Policy

Examinations Policy

ICT Acceptable User Policy

ICT Policy

Malpractice Policy

Performance Management Policy

Personal & Social Education Policy

Safeguarding Policy

School Website Policy

November 2024

ALN Policy

Assessment & Target Setting Policy

Behaviour Policy

Complaints Policy

Eating Disorder Policy

Equalities Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Personal & Social Education (PSE) Policy

Rarely Cover Policy

Redeployment and Redundancy Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Staff Leave of Absence Policy

Staff Pay Policy

February 2025

Accessibility Policy

Charging Policy

Curriculum Policy

Framework of Responsibility

Literacy Policy

Rewards Policy

Shelter and Lockdown Policy

Transport Policy

May 2025

Controlled Assessment Policy

Examinations Policy

Governor Expenses Policy

Staff Grievance Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Workload Impact Policy

July 2025

Examinations Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Key discussions included decisions to consult on school uniform options and the school bus service, as well as engaging with the Council over the delivery of the new catering contract.