

OLDCASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

INSPIRE - MOTIVATE - EDUCATE

Goreu Cam, Cam Cyntaf - The most important step is the first step



Minutes Curriculum 24.1.24

Present – Heather Holder, Ceri Littlewood, Sara Peters, Nia Vaughan, Janine Burr, Lowri George, Damian Faulkner, Amanda Moore, Martin Smidman, Angela Minton, Page Baldwin, Ian Williams

Apologies – Nerys Sales, Lynn Walters, Barrie Lewis.

Non attendance - Matthew Jones

2. **Feedback from the governor wellbeing visit**

For Information	To be Actioned/Response
- Governors participated in a wellbeing review and visit to the school in November 2023, a full report was provided to governors prior to the meeting and is available to view in the governor drive. - Governors met initially with the Junior Leadership Team (JLT) who were very enthusiastic and welcoming, the team were very comfortable discussing the topic and it was clear they felt able to approach a variety of school staff should they have anything that worried them and they felt very safe in school. They talked a lot about the 'Oldcastle family' and it is clear they are very proud of the school and feel included, encouraged and challenged. Discussion continued around reading schemes, outdoor learning and enrichment activities where the children fed back their thoughts and ideas for the future. JLT had also taken part in healthy eating and anti bullying projects and were able to demonstrate the strategies they learned and how they can get further help if needed. - Governors then met with the Family Engagement Officer (Lisa) and PDG Learning Support Officer (Sian) to look at how their roles work within the school and the impact to date. Discussion was focused around how they carry out their roles based on identifying children who need support or are struggling, and then on the needs of the children on a particular day. Time is sometimes an issue for both staff members to carry out their roles effectively, as they are often called upon to cover. - Another Governor met with the outdoor learning champion (Dan) to look at the plans in place, the impact so far and how the role was developing. Dan was extremely enthusiastic and had a clear plan for developing the role further. - The overall outcome was that all three roles are critical to sustaining wellbeing across the school, for both children	- Governors felt it was a really useful and informative visit. Discussion was held around governors revisiting the school to look at the same areas with different groups of children such as PDG, this would help identify the impact on particular groups or cohorts. - Date to be agreed

and families. The beneficial impact is clear and it is crucial to embedding wellbeing practices across the school, this is further demonstrated within the community hub update later in the minutes.

3. Data Update

For Information	To be Actioned
- The headteacher provided a copy of the assessment tracker, this is available to view in the drive. - This tracker is a progression from the previous tracker and provides overall tracking data based on cohorts or classes. An explanation of the content was provided, the first section contains actual teacher data from the Autumn term, the second section contains test data such as, welsh government test and star reader/maths tests. - A governor asked how the targets were set, the headteacher explained the targets were taken from the levels of progress document, however each child works to their own target rather than a cohort or age target. - A governor asked if we would expect a child who is below target now to improve as the year progresses, it was explained that yes they would be expected to go up, but this tracker would not identify individual children as it looks at the cohort as a whole, this data is indicative and not individual, the class teacher and SLT can track individual children. This is an overview in an attempt to collate data, but the individual tracker can drill down to precise data. - The tracker's second page showed a breakdown by groups, for example, EAL, PDG and ALN. - A governor asked if the school can follow progress into secondary school (Brynteg), the headteacher explained that when progression moves to Brynteg, Oldcastle no longer has access to it, however there is feedback on progression through secondary school through cluster links. - Discussion was held around attendance, in particular PDG children, where 62% of children are under 92% attendance. A governor asked what the school is doing to address this, an explanation was provided regarding the new attendance approach by the LA and the forthcoming new attendance policy. The school has sent out its usual attendance letters and will continue with parent meetings which do have an impact. The school and cluster have not yet sent out the LA letters as there is no policy to backup the content of the letters. As soon as the new policy is agreed, the school will review the process and adjust as necessary. Attendance overall at Oldcastle is very good, and all of the children in this category are known to us and we work closely with the families to improve attendance.	Noted, governors discussed how individual targets are harder to track and that it will be interesting to see the tracker at the end of another term to assess how it will look in reality, a governor also stated that it would good to look at an anonymised cohort of data so that they could better understand the individual data and how it compared to class data.

4. Community Hub Update

For Information	To be Actioned/Response
- The school is working on three initiatives, two are underway and the third is in the planning stage. - The baby and toddler group is off to a flying start, with an average of 20 families attending each week, the school has been fortunate to receive a donation from the PTA of	- Noted - Governors discussed the merits of the programme

£2000 to start the project and has some fantastic equipment. The group is led by Mrs Diehl (FEO) and feedback is excellent. The group is open to the community as a whole and it provides a great opportunity for the school to mix with families whose children are yet to start school. • The Pantry also started last week, through a link with Baobab Bach who provide the food bags, bags cost £5 and contain around £20 of ingredients. The school has also received many contributions from families to top up the bags. It has been a slow start but the school is working on marketing the programme to remove some of the stigma attached. Numbers are moving in the right direction and the partnership with Baobab Bach is going well. In the current economic climate this is a lifeline to many families and the school will continue to build on the programme. • The third plan is for a group community room where grandparents etc can meet for a tea or coffee and chat somewhere warm after drop off or before pick up to try and engage our older community. The school will provide an update when this is ready to start.	for both the school and families. • Governors discussed the stigma and ways of overcoming this, with using different bags, but thought it was an excellent way of engaging with the school community and helping those that need it most. The school's FEO is working with many families and is well placed to encourage take up of the bags.
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5. Healthy School Initiative

For Information	To be Actioned
• The head explained that the 'Healthy School' is one which takes responsibility for maintaining and promoting the health of all who 'learn, work, play and live' within it not only by formally teaching pupils about how to lead healthy lives but by enabling pupils and staff to take control over aspects of the school environment which influence their health. It actively promotes, protects and embeds the physical, mental and social health and well-being of its community through positive action. This can be achieved by policy, strategic planning and staff development about its curriculum, ethos, physical environment and community relations. This ethos has been agreed through the welsh network of Healthy School Schemes It has been noted that the content of pupils' lunch boxes could be improved. Many lunch boxes contain processed items which are heavily packaged. These can be ultra-processed foods with little nutritional value. These items can also be costly, putting additional pressure on our families during these difficult times. At Oldcastle, we would like to help our families use more nutritional and sustainable alternatives. While outlining the importance of a healthy diet and how this impacts their lives.	• Governors commented on the video that has been produced by the cluster of schools and how this will be rolled out to parents and children.

Through cluster collaboration, schools have decided to launch a Healthy Schools Campaign focusing on healthy lunch boxes to reduce ultra-processed foods and their packaging. Children across the cluster schools will be the campaign's face and voice. Using the children from our cluster schools would have a greater impact and, in turn, engage parents and the local community.

The Cluster Well-being leads met in November to agree on a strategy. It was decided that whilst the campaign's main focus was to promote and embed healthy lunch box choices, the initial campaign would also look at helping to reduce costs. It was felt that this could be achieved by reducing the packet items, for instance, cheese strings and babybels in favour of a block of cheese or pre-cut bags of fruit in favour of whole pieces. This would also make the lunch boxes more sustainable.

In the New Year, the campaign will be launched with a video featuring pupils from the cluster schools. These children are all members of Pupil Voice or Eco Committees. The children went shopping at a local supermarket for lunchbox items. They discussed their purchased items, ranging from a child's choice to healthier options, considered the nutritional value, and looked at an ideal lunch box. We were fortunate enough to receive some funding from the Asda Community Fund to purchase the food.

The video will be the starting point of the campaign. The intent is that this will be followed up with ideas for parents on healthy and cost-effective alternatives for lunch boxes. The children will make a series of additional videos making these alternatives.

The campaign's effectiveness will be assessed by monitoring lunch boxes after the initial video launch and engaging with children and parents through discussion and questionnaires.

Hopefully, a follow-up campaign will promote physical activity and exercise, focusing on cluster and community involvement. This could be incorporated into the Health and Wellbeing Discovery Week during the Summer week.

It is therefore hoped that through effective stakeholder engagement, the campaign will help to improve the content of our children's lunch boxes, making them healthier, more cost-effective and sustainable. Coupled with an increased level of physical activity, this will have a positive impact on the lives of children and their families. Oldcastle will be launching this after half term in February.

6. **AOB**

For Information	To be Actioned
Budget - A governor asked how the suggested budget cuts will affect the school. The headteacher responded that	Governors discussed the impact of the cuts on the

there is an expected 5% cut to the school's budget, along with a proposal to cut nursery provision for non statutory school age children to 2 hours per day. This along with the potential of this year's pay increments not being funded will lead to a deficit budget at the start of the year. Discussion was held around what plans the school has in place to cut spending to a minimum along with potential staffing cuts. The school has a number of staff on fixed term contracts however, many of these are the same staff that have been discussed today in the wellbeing and community roles which are having a big impact within the school. Discussion was also held around the impact of the removal of full time nursery provision in September 2025, again it is difficult to plan without actual facts, but the school will look at all options to safeguard jobs and nursery provision. The option of wrap around care was discussed and is a potential with the right partner. ● Welsh Jamboree - the school is taking part in a Jamboree with the other cluster schools in March, year 6 children will take part from all schools along with Eisteddfod participants from Brynteg. Children will learn three welsh songs and it will be held at the recreation centre.	school and how the school will need to plan and work with the potential of a deficit budget. This will be discussed in further detail when more information is known.
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All documents relating to the meeting were available to view and comment on in the Governor Drive prior to the meeting.

This is a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Heather Holder
Chair of the Curriculum Committee – Heather Holder

14/3/2024
Date

