

OLDCASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

INSPIRE - MOTIVATE - EDUCATE

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



Minutes Curriculum 6.11.25

- Present** – Heather Holder, Barrie Lewis, Ceri Littlewood, Sara Peters, James Lewis, Martin Smidman, Ian Williams, Damian Faulkner, Ros Whitelock, Rachel Evans, Charlotte Ellett.

Apologies –Lowri George, Lynn Walters, Jack Shaw, Nerys Sales, Page Baldwin, Amanda Moore, Angela Minton.

Guest - Lyndsey Hodgson - Deputy Headteacher, Alison Jenner - School Improvement Partner

2. To confirm the elected chair of the Curriculum Committee for the year 25-26

For Information	To be Actioned/Response
Ros Whitelock was elected by the curriculum committee for the forthcoming school year.	Agreed by all present

3. Presentation from Charlotte Ellett on Curriculum Standards

For Information	To be Actioned
The Estyn report highlights concerns around Teaching and Learning (T&L), specifically our pedagogical approach. The feedback indicates an over-reliance on direct instruction, resulting in underdeveloped independent learning skills among pupils, and they also note that learners are consequently not sufficiently challenged. Therefore, to raise learning standards, we must address pedagogical practice across the school. However, because pedagogy is intrinsically linked to curriculum design what Estyn is really telling us is that our teachers do not sufficiently understand CfW because they are not teaching for it. Direct teaching remains a valid strategy, but it is primarily used for teaching knowledge. If we are over-reliant on that method, then our teachers are interpreting CfW as a Content Curriculum, which it isn't. CfW is a process orientated curriculum. Curriculum design is driven by learners' needs and the desire to develop the whole child. Our teachers talk about how much they have to cover and about the standard of their teaching. Their focus is on what they are doing, not on what the learners are doing as Estyn is. There are understandable reasons for this: Teachers were pupils in a content curriculum and were trained to teach a content curriculum, and were held to account for	Noted

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- that so teaching in this way is natural and difficult to change.
- Jeremy introduced a knowledge-rich curriculum during his tenure and so again staff are used to this way of working
- Ceri is making changes, conscious that change management at this scale is difficult and must be done at a sustainable pace - Welsh Gov recognises this - but Estyn is suggesting that it's time to take bigger steps.

We have to address teachers' levels of understanding of curriculum so that they know what CfW is trying to achieve so that their pedagogy is aligned to those aims, and this will lead to rising standards because the definition of curriculum standards has changed. In the previous content driven curriculum standards were narrowly defined as being literacy and numeracy levels.

But in CfW, standards relate to holistic progression articulated by the Principles of Progression.

We are good at addressing knowledge and skills but what Estyn has told us that we are not addressing the effectiveness of learners and if we are overusing direct teaching within a content heavy curriculum then learners will not be developing understanding from their knowledge and skills, and will not be transferring them to new/unfamiliar situations. And therefore levels of challenge will remain low and standards will not rise, because we are not teaching for CfW because our curriculum isn't aligned with CfW and therefore we are not teaching appropriately.

While these factors cannot be resolved overnight, other schools in the country, and indeed other schools in Bridgend county, are progressing, and we must do the same.

Discussion was held around the difference in planning for content and planning for process, clarification was provided

Content Driven- 'What do I teach, What are the fact's, What are the skills'.

Process Driven is 'Why am i teaching this, Does it meet the purpose of the curriculum, Is it authentic and engaging'

Alison Jenner thanked and congratulated Charlotte on such an excellent presentation.

Discussion was held around the new wave of teachers entering schools from University and if the school is seeing this type of teaching from them. The Headteacher responded that the school has not seen a change in new teachers coming in, it seems the Universities are still focusing heavily on content and it may take some time for this to change.

A governor asked how big a transformation for the Oldcastle team this would be. The Head responded that change has started, however it is a long journey, for some it is natural for others it is much harder as it is difficult to change, when it is how you were taught and your experience over many years.

Discussion was held around a recent visitor to the school, and how his talk had been used in teaching. CE advised that this was a great

example of teaching by process, the talk was meaningful, interesting, very authentic and children were able to make a connection between what they had learned factually and real life, career engagement was also a big part of the connection.

A governor asked about additional Professional Development available to teachers to assist in achieving this change. AJ advised that she has a colleague who assists with this and she has already asked her to attend Oldcastle to support with this. This would be a positive way forward.

4. Reading, Spelling and WAG Data Update

For Information	To be Actioned/Response
A testing overview was provided to governors, detailing what the tests are, how they are administered and the overall purpose along with what data school gains from each test. Examples of each test were also provided so that Governors could see the questions. This overview is available to view in the school drive. • Salford Reading test • WAG testing • SWST - Spelling test An overview of test data for the new school year was provided, and a copy of this is available to view in the school drive. Overall the data is positive, Reading is a little low in Year 2 however trends upwards from year 3 and up. Discussion was held around the relevance of testing Year 2, LH confirmed it is relevant as it provides a base line for use in assessment moving forward and a good indication of where the school needs to concentrate its efforts. The school uses this data to plan and target specific actions through interventions. It is also worth noting that this data is a snap shot of a moment in time, often the overall class and teacher data is different. CL explained how testing has been an interesting process this year, the testing was completed in a different style to previous years and much more information was gained. The plan moving forward is for the teachers to complete the testing as this information will be much more relevant to them in their teaching. Discussion was held around the types of intervention planned and when this would be completed. CL advised that due to staff illness and constraints with budget and staffing, it is currently on hold but this should change with ongoing recruitment. WAG data was discussed and how this was very positive throughout the school, a governor pointed out that WAG outcomes were higher than the Salford Testing data, and was this normal. AJ advised that this is a recurring theme across schools, due to benchmark changes in standardised scoring by WG. CL stated that it is important to remember that the tests are a snapshot and what is important is what is happening in classes and going on in the school and you will see that in the book look.	• Noted

5. Curriculum Challenges

For Information	To be Actioned
Ceri Littlewood presented a SWOT analysis for discussion. The report is available to view in the school drive. It highlights the critical areas that need addressing for effective school improvement. The aim of the report was to provide a structured approach to discuss the challenges and potential solutions with the governing body, by focusing on strengths and opportunities while addressing weaknesses and threats, concluding that this should assist in developing a strategic plan to move forward effectively. Discussion was held around how budget constraints affect these challenges. CL clarified that the school is not as far along with the SIP as it would like to be and this is down to lack of budget, this is a big worry as there are concerns around how SLT can move the school forward. Some actions have been identified and these are listed in the analysis.	• Noted

6. Book look

For Information	To be Actioned
A selection of books were provided for Governors to look through. Governors were very impressed with the books and passed their thanks to the teachers for sharing them.	

7. AOB

For Information	To be Actioned/Response
Staffing Update moved to Private and Confidential CL congratulated Rachel Evans and Charlotte Ellet on their recent successful appointments to TLR posts within the school. SP advised that two members of the school catering team won an award today for work they did last summer in the food for fun events held by the Welsh government. The staff members attended a ceremony today and were presented with their award.	• Agreed • Noted • Governors wished the school to pass on their thanks and congratulations to the staff involved.

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.



18/11/2025

Chair of the Curriculum Committee –Ros Whitelock

Date