

OLDCASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

INSPIRE - MOTIVATE - EDUCATE

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



Minutes FGB Meeting 19/03/2025

Present - Ceri Littlewood, Lyn Walters, Barrie Lewis, Lowri George, Janine Burr, Rachel Evans, Martin Smidman, Sara Peters, Heather Holder, James Lewis, Ian Williams

Apologies - Nerys Sales, Jack Shaw, Amanda Moore, Damian Faulkner, Ros Whitelock, Page Baldwin

Non attenders - Angela Minton

2.Presentation Cost of Living - L Hodgson

• For Information	• To be Actioned
- LH presented a report on the cost of living exercise being carried out by the school as part of a cluster project. The aim of the project is to address how schools can support families and communities in the fight against poverty and growing costs. The cluster's vision is to tackle the impact of poverty such as increased stress, lack of funds/heat/food, inability to take part in activities and how this affects concentration, learning, attendance and wellbeing. The school has carried out a cost of living survey, 19% of parents responded and many of these felt supported and felt the school was approachable and appreciated that the school attempted to keep the cost of activities/trips low. They also acknowledged that the school offers many signposts for help. Focus group meetings have also been set up to discuss ideas on money saving and how the school can further assist. The school is currently carrying out the following strategies; - Data tracking with a focus on vulnerable groups - Interventions - Attendance tracking - Wellbeing support (Thrive, FEO, Shine) - Monitoring of planning, teaching and learning of vulnerable groups - Signposting through communication and staff awareness - The school also has a free uniform facility and food pantry The next steps are to continue growing the support we already receive, encourage engagement from more families, run more focus groups and to further develop staff awareness.	- A governor asked if the school had any children who presented as malnourished? CL responded that we did not, we did have children who attended without having breakfast and the school is able to provide this by way of fruit or toast. Staff are very good at spotting this. - A governor congratulated the school on the tremendous work it was doing in supporting the community, particularly the recent fashion show, the support provided by staff for this event was outstanding.

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3. To confirm the minutes from the following meetings

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• FGB meeting 20.11.24	• Agreed
• Additional FGB Meeting 13.2.25	• Agreed

4. To confirm the minutes of the following meetings

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• Curriculum Meeting 17.2.25	• Agreed
• Finance Meeting 17.2.25	• Agreed

5. Matters Arising

• For Information	• To be Actioned
- Outstanding item from the minutes regarding feedback to Estyn from governors. - Outstanding item DBS policy questions. - SIP Governor Priority Groups confirmed; Reading - Amanda, Janine, Heather Self Evaluation - Nerys, Lyn, Damian Outdoor Learning - Angela, Sara, Martin, Ian, James Challenge - Lowri, Ros, Barrie Jack and Page are to be confirmed	- It was agreed that this had been left a little late and the Chair, Vice Chair and Head had agreed it was not considered worthwhile at this late stage. - The Directors report of 16/12/24 contained a new DBS policy which has been approved by the LA and Unions. - Action - Jack and Page to be added to a group.

6. Directors Report Autumn and Spring Term

• For Information	• To be Actioned
- For Information Items - DBS Policy - Disciplinary Policy	- Noted - Agreed - Agreed

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- Flexible Working Policy
- Substance Misuse Protocol

- Agreed
- Agreed
- Agreed

7. Headteachers Report

▪ For Information	▪ To be Actioned
The Headteachers report is available to view in the school drive – SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN POST ESTYN Following our recent Estyn inspection, the senior leadership team has taken significant steps to update our School Improvement Plan. This updated plan reflects our commitment to addressing the recommendations provided by the inspection team and enhancing the quality of education for all our pupils. SELF EVALUATION Introduction: The following provides a detailed evaluation of the curriculum at Oldcastle Primary School, as part of the school's ongoing self-evaluation process. The report aligns with the school's improvement priorities and the recommendations from the recent Estyn inspection. Objective: The school leadership has identified the need to conduct a comprehensive self-evaluation of the curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils and supports the school's vision of "Inspire, Motivate, and Educate." Actions: The school has undertaken the following key actions: ▪ Rag rating the self-evaluation document ▪ Monitoring of planning ▪ Monitoring of marking and feedback ▪ Learning Walks Impact The self-evaluation process has highlighted several positive aspects of the curriculum at Oldcastle Primary School:	• A governor asked for clarification regarding the terms used, for example most, some, nearly all? • CL responded that

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- **In most classes, teachers are increasingly aware of pupils' starting points and provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge.** However, at times, the support or challenge for pupils who are below or above expected performance lacks precision.
- **The learning environment usually has relevant prompts to support or challenge pupils,** but adjustments to reflect all pupils' needs do not always occur as necessary.
- **The pace of teaching is usually appropriate to the needs of many pupils,** but can sometimes lack appropriateness due to a lack of awareness of the learner's starting points or emotional needs.
- **Most teachers and staff have high expectations of most pupils** and convey this explicitly through their actions and feedback.
- **Teachers use appropriate questioning techniques to encourage further development of pupils' answers and assess their understanding,** and they often adjust learning experiences as a result.
- **Verbal and written feedback from teachers helps most pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve,** and in-session assessment is strong and secure.
- **Most teachers successfully analyse assessment outcomes and use them effectively to inform planning and assess the progress of specific individuals and groups.**
- **The learning environment stimulates learners with interest, excitement, and intrigue,** and a good range of suitable and engaging resources are available for pupils to access independently.
- **Most pupils are beginning to learn independently with less adult involvement,** and they respond appropriately to the contributions of others in collaborative learning.
- **The curriculum provides good breadth and depth of learning experiences for most pupils,** and the school provides valuable

the terms come from ESTYN, and this is the expectation of how self evaluation is reported.



- **ACTION - CL** will send clarification of the terms out to governors so that they can understand the percentages involved in using the terms. For example most is over 90%.

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learning experiences outside the classroom that link directly to the planned curriculum.

- **The pace of teaching is usually appropriate to the needs of many pupils**, but can sometimes lack appropriateness of the learner's starting points or emotional needs.
- **The school's curriculum is based on an accurate and detailed analysis of the school's context**, and it provides rich, engaging, and innovative provision relating to the history, culture, ethnic diversity, and linguistic make-up of the local community, Wales, and the wider world.
- **The curriculum routinely provides a well-considered range of rich and relevant experiences that interest and inspire pupils**, and a wide range of extra-curricular experiences, visits, and visitors are in place.
- **The curriculum successfully develops pupils' strong ability to reflect on religious and non-religious responses, fundamental questions, and their own beliefs or values**, and most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of what an ethical, informed citizen is.
- **The curriculum has good arrangements to support pupils with emotional, health, and social needs**, and the school provides well-considered support for pupils' mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- **Most pupils' listening, reading, speaking, writing, numeracy, and digital skills across the curriculum are good**, and they are able to communicate well and process learning effectively.
- **Most pupils acquire and secure subject skills at the appropriate level for their needs**, and they are increasingly able to apply their literacy, numeracy, and digital skills across the curriculum.
- **Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and have an excellent understanding and application of the purposes of rules, rewards, and sanctions in school**, and they show very high levels of sustained interest and positivity in their learning.

- A governor asked if the school has seen an improvement. CL responded that yes, staff have really taken on board the comments made and changes are ongoing. The school has revisited the marking policy. The quality of work being produced across the board is excellent.
- A governor asked if governors would have the opportunity to look at some of the books?
- ACTION – CL will arrange some books for the next curriculum meeting.

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Next Steps:

Based on the findings of this self-evaluation, the school's next steps include:

- Refine the support and challenge provided for pupils who are below or above expected performance
- Continue to develop teachers' awareness of learners' needs and their ability to adjust the pace of teaching accordingly.
- Explore further opportunities for pupils to lead their own learning and develop independent learning skills.

Conclusion:

The self-evaluation of the curriculum at the school has highlighted many strengths, including the positive learning environment, the breadth and depth of the curriculum, and the good progress made by most pupils in developing their skills across the curriculum. However, the report also identifies areas for improvement, such as ensuring appropriate challenge for all pupils, strengthening support for vulnerable learners, and developing pupils' independent learning skills.

ITE - Mrs R. Taylor -Jones

Feedback and Monitoring

We have received highly positive feedback regarding our support for student teachers from both Swansea University and the University of South Wales (USW).

This feedback has been consistently positive across all parties involved in the process, including student teachers and university representatives.

To ensure continuous improvement, we have implemented entry and exit questionnaires to track and monitor feedback.

Student induction resources, including the Student Induction Padlet, continue to provide structured support for new trainees, ensuring a smooth transition into their placements.

University of South Wales (USW)

We were honoured to be selected as part of USW's Estyn Inspection, specifically evaluating the Mentoring Programme. This process involved 2

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member of staff and one trainee teacher. The school currently has four students from USW.

Swansea University

This relationship continues to expand and Rebecca has been appointed as an ITE lead for 5 schools. There are currently 7 students in this grouping.

ASPIRE Programme

ASPIRE is an annual professional development programme hosted at Oldcastle. This year, twelve Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) participated in a five-session programme, led by Rebecca Taylor-Jones, our Professional Development Lead.

Rebecca was observed and moderated by Lucy Donovan, Associate Advisor at CSC and received outstanding feedback, which was shared with our Improvement Partner and Lindsey Harvey.

Newly Qualified Teachers(NQT)

Our current NQT, Kirsty McManus, is teaching in Year 3. Kirsty recently completed her first research project, focusing on **Classroom Community and Fostering Positive Relationships**. Her project involved trialling various approaches, monitoring progress and impact, and ultimately producing a research paper. This paper was shared in staff meetings and served as a foundation for the **Peer-To-Peer Coaching Programme**.

Professional Development – Staff Coaching

We have launched our **Peer-To-Peer Coaching** programme as part of staff development. This initiative involves staff working in **Coaching Partnerships** to support professional growth.

- Governors commented on how good the attendance looked and congratulated the school on the work being done.

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Attendance -Miss Hodgson

Overall Progress:

- Autumn Term: Slightly below the 95% target.
- Spring Term: Exceeded target for 5 weeks, with only minor shortfalls (0.4% and 0.6% below target). Current attendance at 95.98% is above the target, which is great progress.

Gender Breakdown:

- Girls: Improved from 93.7% to 94.5%. Still below target but showing positive movement.
- Boys: Improved from 94.3% to 94.8%, slightly below target but also improving.

Vulnerable Groups:

- Autumn Term: Half of the vulnerable groups (ALN, PDG, EAL) were below target.
- Positive: CEC, Service children, Young Carers exceeded the target.
- Spring Term: Almost all vulnerable groups exceeded the target, except FSM (which rose from 91.8% to 93.2%).

Action Plan and Tracking:

- Attendance letters will be sent home at the end of the Spring term are a good way to keep parents informed and involved.
- EWO meetings every 3 weeks to discuss pupils with attendance below 92.% shows a proactive approach to intervention.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT - MISS S. MATTHEWS

During the first eight weeks of the autumn term, the Curriculum and Assessment Lead collaborated closely with Mrs. Littlewood to gain a thorough understanding of our school's curriculum and assessment approach. As part of this, the medium-term plans for each progression step have been reviewed and evaluated, paying particular attention to the breadth and depth of learning, as well as how they reflect the history, cultural and linguistic heritage, ethnic diversity, identities, and perspectives of the local area, Wales, and the wider world. Following this, feedback was presented in staff meetings to help ensure that planning demonstrates clear progression across these steps. Staff immediately implemented these suggestions.

COMMUNITY ROOM - MRS S PETERS

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The Community Room and Food Pantry was established in January 2024 in partnership with Baobab Bach and we have recently been supported by a private donor. The school has also just discovered that it has been awarded a Community School Funding Grant, there is limited information on this at present however it is around £31,000, at this stage the details of how it can be spent is unknown but this will be shared in due course.

Food Pantry

The aim of the Oldcastle Pantry is to provide affordable and nutritious food for our community. We currently have 71 members. Between 15 and 30 people use the pantry weekly.

Every week, we receive a food donation from Baobab Bach, which includes a variety of items suitable for families. We have been fortunate to receive a regular donation of £1000 per month to the food pantry, which is used to purchase food from local supermarkets.

The school and Baobab Bach have also been allocated a Fairshare Food Collection from Asda in Pyle.

Additional one-off funding has allowed the school to purchase supermarket gift vouchers at Christmas time and provide these to targeted families who we know will benefit from such a donation.

The school has also been fortunate to receive a regular monthly donation of £1000.00 per month this year.

The Community Room is now open and provides a warm welcoming space for our whole school community. We also operate a tea and toast morning on Tuesdays where the Barclays Community Banker also visits.

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BUDGET

School Budget - period 11 update

Allocation	£1,616,849
Income	£503,353
Underspend from last year	<u>£137,287</u>
Total amount available	£2,259,489
Estimated Expenditure	<u>£2,192,825</u>
Estimated credit	<u>£66,665</u>

Budget continues to be a challenge, the school is still awaiting a budget for the coming year but there are some elements that are known, 1% overall cut, a clawback of £21,000 due to a drop in pupil numbers and a £24,000 drop in the PDG Grant.

The school is working on a number of budget considerations to reduce costs should they be required when the budget arrives, these include -.

- Moving the Deputy Head to oversee Nursery and employing a NNEB/HLTA or equivalently qualified person to oversee the day-to-day activities, thus saving the cost of a teacher.
- Depending on September pupil numbers the school could potentially reduce the reception year group to one class, thus saving the cost of a teacher.
- Moving to a mixed class in Nursery, Reception or Year 1 depending on numbers, thus saving the cost of a teacher.

Discussion was held around what offers the best outcomes for children against the need to try and avoid redundancies in the coming year, and the impact of the changes on other staff members. The school would like to try and avoid mixed classes and these are just considerations at this stage and the school will balance all decisions against the impact on pupils.

Governors felt that the school should not try and avoid redundancies but deal with that as it arises, discussion was held around what would happen if the school enters a deficit budget and what the procedures are.

HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

An update was provided to all governors and a report is provided in the school drive.

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8. Safeguarding and Compliant

For Information	To be Actioned
Moved to Private and Confidential	

9. Staffing

For Information	To be Actioned
Moved to the end of the meeting - Private and Confidential	

10. Spending Plans

For Information	To be Actioned
- Inventory sign in update, current system has not had a hardware update for 6 years. £1750.00 - quote received - Replacement classroom screens, two have been replaced and they are all starting to fail. £12,276.00 - 3 quotes received and these will be checked against the HWB pot for a cost check. - Outdoor Learning Resources, some items need replacing and there is a wish list for classes. £5780.00 60 replacement chrome books for classes £14742.00 Quotes received Extra scope is the best value. - Literacy books £1265.00 - Emergency Lighting repairs £3000.00 - quote received. - CCTV upgrade, one additional camera to site £1000.00 - Total Cost of the above is £39,813.00, orders will be placed shortly.	Agreed by FGB

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- Staffing costs -moved to Private and Confidential

11. Correspondance brought forward at the discretion of the chair

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• None	• Noted

12. AOB

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• The school recently worked with the Mayor Ian Williams and Venetia Steele Boutique raising funds for a local charity 'Y Bont' a total of £2,730 was raised. The Headteacher and the Mayor wished to thank the PTA, school staff and Nicola from Venetia Steel Boutique for all their hard work in putting together such a fantastic evening, there was lots of support from the local community and it was a memorable evening. • A governor asked why the school had not attended the Urdd rugby tournament? CL responded that the school was attending a number of rugby, tennis and football tournaments in the coming weeks and months and it was not possible to attend everything the school was invited too. The cost of participating in the events is sometimes considerable and the Headteacher chooses which ones to take part in. • A governor asked about changes to the enrichment programme and PE lessons, and wanted clarification regarding the lessons. The Headteacher responded that PE no longer stood alone as a lesson, PE comes under Health and Wellbeing. Years 3 to 6 children now have combined enrichment and PE activities, generally this means a combination of actual PE, PE theory and Enrichment, Health and Wellbeing on a rota basis. A governor asked who had decided it should be like this instead of a weekly lesson. CL responded that it is part of the National Curriculum and PE is part of the Health and Wellbeing AOLE.	• Noted

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- A governor commented on how amazing the Oldcastle boys had been in the under 11's district semi-final on the weekend, the boys played amazingly and the team is through to the final.
- A governor asked how the transfer for HR and Payroll services back to the LA was proceeding.
CL responded that it was going very well, the majority of the work had been completed, and the school meets with the LA weekly to answer queries and iron out any issues. The LA have been extremely helpful in this process and communication is good.
CL and Governors wished to thank Addell Whiteley for all her hard work with both the LA and Judicium in the handover period.

The minutes are a true reflection of the meeting held on Tuesday 13.3.24

Agreed

Name -

D. Faulkner

Date -

9.7.25

Signed -

Damian Faulkner Chair of Governors