



Minutes FGB Meeting 20/11/24

Present - Ceri Littlewood, Nerys Sales, Barrie Lewis, Lowri George, Janine Burr, Nia Vaughan, Jack Shaw, Martin Smidman, Sara Peters, Angela Minton, Heather Holder, Damian Faulkner, Page Baldwin.

Apologies - Lyn Walters, Ian Williams, Amanda Moore, Jack Shaw

2. Finance Update

● For Information	● To be Actioned
Current Data - Budget Allocation £1,579,111 - Other Income £382,660 - Underspend £137,287 - TOTAL £2,099,058 - Estimated Expenditure £2,053,419 - Estimated Credit £45,639 - The school continues to micro manage the budget to conserve funds as much as possible - A governor asked how the Headteacher was feeling about the budget, the Headteacher responded that budget continues to be tight, this year would be ok, but next year could be difficult with a further 2% cut expected.	○ Noted
Private Funds - All three funds are currently with the auditors and when they are ready they will be given to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors for final sign off before submission to the Charities Commission. Balances as at 1.11.24 - Private Fund £56,731.61, this fund holds funds for all the terms trips and planned enrichment activities. These funds are then moved back to budget at the end of the financial year. - Music Fund £5,491.07, this fund holds all funds for the year's music lessons and is transferred across to the budget at the end of the financial year. - After School Club £22,405.63, this fund holds all the years after school club funds, this is transferred across to budget at the end	

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of the financial year, last year's costs totalled just under £49,000.

3. Visit from Tony Edmunds

● For Information	● To be Actioned
- Tony Edmunds Chair of Governors Litchard Primary and Vice Chair Penybont Primary visited the meeting to talk about his collaborative work between the two schools. - He explained what worked well and how he had utilised ideas across both schools, he explained how he managed his role by taking a very hands on approach and being very visible and available to SLT, staff and parents, offering an environment which felt very safe, where people could have a say and feel listened too. Communication between governors was also very open and frequent, group chats were used regularly to share information. The school Newsletter is also used regularly to share governor information and updates. - Governance is split by linking governors to specific areas of the School Improvement Plan, where they oversee priorities and monitor milestones. - A governor asked if he had done anything specific to raise his profile within the schools, Tony responded that he had written a personal letter of introduction pointing out his aims and aspirations for all parents and he felt this had worked well. - Tony explained that he had recently set up a chair cluster meeting which offered all chairs within the cluster an opportunity to share ideas and work together to improve all schools within the cluster.	Governors thanked Tony for taking the time to visit and would certainly take forward his points to discuss at a future meeting, to see what ideas they could use.

4. To confirm the minutes of the FGB Meetings

● For Information	● To be Actioned
● Housekeeping Meeting 9.7.24	● Agreed
● Emergency Meeting 26.9.24	● Agreed
● Extraordinary Meeting 17.1.24	● Agreed

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5. To confirm the minutes of any Committee Meetings

For Information	To be Actioned
Curriculum 26.9.24	Agreed

6. Matters Arising

For Information	To be Actioned
None	

7. To receive the Report of the Director of Education

For Information	To be Actioned
Not yet received 20.11.24	Noted

8. To receive the Report for the Headteacher

For Information	To be Actioned
ESTYN - The recent Estyn inspection at Oldcastle Primary School highlighted several positive aspects of the school's provision and identified areas for further development. The school is pleased that the Estyn inspectors recognised some of its strengths and provided clear recommendations on which to build. The full report will be available for all stakeholders from December 20th. - Governors raised concerns around the effect of the inspection process on school staff, general feeling was that the process was very negative and an extremely stressful experience for all school staff. A parent governor stated that the parents meeting was also a negative experience, as the inspectors involved did not really seem interested in what parents had to say. Discussion was held around feeding back to Estyn on the overall experience, and governors agreed to do this following publication of the full report. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT Guided Reading Years 2 to 6 As part of the school improvement priority to improve the provision of reading across the school, the school has developed	Agreed action for early in 2025.

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the whole-school approach to guided reading. This has included implementing a standard proforma for learning to ensure consistency across the school.

- **Implementation**

All classes now follow a consistent approach to guided reading, with a clear proforma outlining the structure and expectations for each session. This includes:

Pre-reading activities to activate prior knowledge and introduce key vocabulary

Supported reading of the text, with the teacher providing scaffolding and modelling as needed

Comprehension activities to check understanding and develop higher-order reading skills

Opportunities for pupils to respond to the text, make connections and share opinions

- **Impact**

It is still early days. The school is yet to see a significant impact on pupils' reading ages. However, the Welsh Government data is very positive, indicating that the whole-school reading approach is having a positive effect. Crucially, we are seeing greater consistency in the quality of guided reading sessions across the school.

As the approach moves forward, we will continue to monitor the impact of the guided reading provision, making adjustments as needed to ensure that all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and with additional learning needs, are supported to reach their full potential in reading.

- **Spelling**

The school has adopted a setting approach to spelling in order to raise standards across the school. This approach recognises that pupils have diverse needs and abilities when it comes to spelling, and allows us to target our teaching and support more effectively.

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The spelling curriculum is carefully sequenced to build pupils' knowledge of phonics, common spelling patterns, and keyword lists. Teachers use a range of effective pedagogical approaches, including:

Explicit instruction in spelling rules and strategies

Frequent low-stakes testing to reinforce learning

Opportunities for pupils to apply their spelling knowledge in their written work

To ensure the success of this initiative, we will be closely monitoring the progress of our pupils through regular assessment and data analysis. This will allow us to identify areas for further development and make any necessary adjustments to our approach.

DATA

- The Headteacher provided a breakdown regarding pupil data, population data, this is available to view in the school drive.

The school has lower pupil numbers this year than previous years (mainly in Nursery and Reception classes).

- A breakdown was provided for WAG Reading, Procedural and Reasoning results, this is available to view in the school drive. Discussion was held around the results being generally very positive and how the school is seeing an improvement in data which comes from the targeted support which is happening.

A governor asked why year 2 and year 3 were lower overall, the Headteacher responded that generally year 2 are lower every year because it is the first time these children access the test. Year 3 are struggling with sounds, we can track this back to school missed due to Covid, support is in place and we are seeing improvements.

A governor asked if the school sees WAG data from other schools as a comparison, the Headteacher responded that we don't see other school data however there are standardised scores which are

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collated from all results, generally the schools standardised scores are very good.

ATTENDANCE DATA

Attendance data year to date is 94.8%, the school target is 95% this year and we continue to work closely with the EWO to ensure we meet this target.

WHOLE SCHOOL TARGETS

- While Wales has moved away from fixed targets, the schools goal remains to ensure that all pupils make progress from their individual starting points. Setting personalised targets is a tool that helps the school monitor that progress effectively. It's not about meeting external benchmarks but ensuring that each pupil is being stretched and challenged to reach their full potential. By having clear goals, the school can better identify areas where pupils may need more support or encouragement, ensuring their progress is steady and tailored to their needs. This was discussed in the recent Curriculum meeting and a copy of the targets are available to view in the school drive

DATA TLR TEACHING AND LEARNING

- 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.

TLR ITE

- During the academic year, the school has continued to deliver a high-quality ITE programme in collaboration with Swansea and USW. The main focus is on developing professional, reflective, and

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capable teachers. The programme aims to provide trainees with a robust understanding of pedagogy, classroom management, and subject knowledge, while also fostering a passion for teaching and lifelong learning.

- The success of our ITE program relies heavily on the support provided by mentor class-based teachers. This year, we have been able to offer mentor teachers specific training at the Universities which has been a real success. This has enabled our school-based mentors to continue to offer a high level of guidance and support to trainees, providing regular formative feedback and facilitating opportunities for professional development. It has also benefited our teachers' professional development and inspired them to want to develop their students and their coaching practice.

- **USW**

This is a new partnership for Oldcastle and so far it has been successful for all involved. Oldcastle has already been recognised and commended during a USW Quality Assessor visit, as fulfilling our requirements to a high standard and supporting our students effectively. Both students received good feedback during observations and mentors were praised for their high level of support and input.

Oldcastle staff have attended Mentoring Days at USW and met their students in advance. This has been an invaluable tool for both our teachers' professional development and for us to provide high-quality mentoring experiences.

The school currently has four USW Students at Oldcastle.

- **Swansea**

An ongoing partnership which is moving from strength to strength. We enjoyed being part of their Estyn Inspection back in July, having been chosen as an observation school.

More recently, Russell Grigg, ITE Director at Swansea has asked if Oldcastle would be part of a Task and Finish Group for Mentoring at the University which is a fantastic professional development opportunity to be involved with higher-level conversations at the University.

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Oldcastle has also been invited to become an ITE Associate Lecturer for the University, linking with other schools in our partnership and undertaking observations on behalf of Swansea.

The school currently has two Swansea Students at Oldcastle and five students within the Oldcastle Partnership (Two in Brackla and one in Litchard).

- **Aspire**

This is an annual programme that we have previously delivered at Oldcastle. NQTs from around the area are invited to attend a 5-session programme of professional development. The programme will be delivered by our Professional Development lead, Rebecca Taylor-Jones.

- **NQTs**

Rebecca Taylor-Jones is our Induction Mentor for NQTs this year. The NQT programme has changed this year, research projects are now completed rather than having to provide evidence against the Professional Teaching Standards. Regular training sessions are attended both regionally and nationally in order to keep up to date with the latest developments. Lauren Tompinkson has now completed her NQT successfully and is a Qualified Teacher. She has been instrumental in co-leading an exciting and engaging Expressive Arts programme across all Progression Steps at Oldcastle. Matthew Prior is our current NQT who is teaching in Year 3.

- **Professional Development - Staff Coaching**

The school is developing a rigorous staff development coaching and mentoring plan. This will involve staff working together in 'Coaching Partnerships'. Coaching for Oldcastle is going to be a powerful process of supporting someone to move forward towards a goal. It will be a highly structured way of working together through a series of discussions, tasks and goals. The coach will enable the coachee to take responsibility for their learning and develop an awareness of their situation, increasing their skills and reaching their potential. This will allow for creative solutions to problems to emerge, where the coachee takes ownership of their

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development. At Oldcastle, coaching is an open-ended process that takes time. It's not *telling* someone how to improve. It's non-hierarchical and non-judgemental. It's about sustainable improvement. It's about **owning change**.

TLR ALN

The ALNCo has continued to support children with Additional Learning Needs at Oldcastle Primary School. Nia Vaughan has joined the ALN team. She is currently working alongside the ALNCo to gain insight into the role.

We currently have seven children on school-based IDPs. The ALNCo has worked with parents, outside professionals and the child to ensure the ALP is targeted and specific to the child's needs.

The ALNCo has worked with staff and parents to complete referrals to further support children and gain outside advice and support where necessary. One referral has been submitted for specialist placements for September 2025.

The ALNCo has applied for 1;1 ancillary for support for five children.

The ALNCo has attended ALNCo forums with the Local Authority and Cluster lead meetings. This ensures that information is current and any key issues are addressed with all ALNCOs to ensure consistency within schools. The ALNCO has worked closely with the cluster ALNCOs to share good practices and resources and streamline processes across the cluster. This ensures that all children have consistent opportunities to ease the transition to comprehensive school.

The ALNCo met with the ALN Governors to discuss ALN across the school.

The ALNCO works closely with parents who need support and advice on the best ways to help their children. This support can be through advice, referrals, signposting and regular meetings. This ensures the child is supported and positive links with parents are nurtured.

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HEALTH and SAFETY

Sara Peters presented the Health and Safety Report, a copy is available to view in the school drive.

9. Policies to be reviewed

For Information	To be Actioned
• Anti bullying Policy • Prevent Policy • Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy • Safeguarding Policy • Social Media Policy • Governor Visits Policy Discussion was held around the new DBS policy which sits within the Safeguarding Policy, and whether this applies to Volunteers as well as staff. The school will look into this and follow whatever guidance is given.	• Agreed • Agreed • Agreed • Agreed • Agreed • Agreed • CL to check

10. Safeguarding and Bullying

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• Moved to P and C	• Noted

11. Training Updates

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• All governors completed safeguarding group A training in October 2024. • HH has delayed chair training to next term. • New governors will apply to Pupil Services for their training schedule.	• Noted

12. Governor Vacancies

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For Information	To be Actioned
Teaching Governor - Nia Vaughan's term ends today and the role will be advertised internally as per terms and conditions	Noted

13. Correspondance brought forward by the chair

For Information	To be Actioned
None	Noted

12. AOB

For Information	To be Actioned
- Discussion was held around the dissemination of information to governors outside of the normal meetings, for example when a monthly meeting is held between the Chair, Vice-Chair and Headteacher. Governors felt that it would be prudent that they be made aware of any important issues immediately rather than wait until the next FGB meeting. - It was agreed that the Chair will filter information from the meetings and share important items following the monthly meetings.	Agreed

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

Agreed

Name - DAMIAN FAULKNER Date - 09/07/25

Signed - [Signature]

Damian Faulkner Chair of Governors

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