

Oldcastle Primary School Minutes FGB Meeting 09/07/2025

Present - Ceri Littlewood, Nerys Sales, Lowri George, Sara Peters, Heather Holder, Damian Faulkner, Ian Williams, Barrie Lewis, Lyn Walters, Rachel Evans

Apologies - Angela Minton, Jack Shaw, Amanda Moore, Martin Smidman, Janine Burr

Not Present - Page Baldwin, James Lewis

Guest - Lyndsey Hodgson

2. To confirm Minutes form the meetings held

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• FGB Meeting 19.3.25 • Finance Meeting 7.5.2025	• Agreed • Agreed

3. Matters Arising

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• Outstanding items ○ Jack Shaw and Page Baldwin to be added to SIP teams, following discussion, it was decided that this should be discarded as there will be new oversight teams set up in the new school year. ○ Ceri Littlewood to send out a description of the Estyn meanings.	• Noted • Completed 9/7/25

4. Directors Report Summer Term 2025

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• Not yet received, AW will send it out for information as soon as it arrives.	• Noted

5. Governors Report back on SIP Areas

• For Information	• To be Actioned
<u>Report Provided from the Reading SIP Team</u>, the report is available to view in the school drive. Brief overview, data become available a few weeks ago and the difference between September and now is clear, strong progress has been made and the intervention programme is working. Reception and Year 1 have made very good progress. Year 2 to 6 has seen a huge increase in pupil progress.	• Noted

Mrs Ceri Littlewood - Headteacher
South Street, Bridgend. CF31 3ED

Telephone: 01656 815790 Email: admin@oldcastleps.bridgend.cymru / ask@oldcastleprimary.co.uk
www.oldcastleprimary.co.uk

This information has come from teacher assessment but is also supported by WAG test results. Overall it builds a very strong picture.

The school has made a decision to move away from Star Reader as a testing method for reading and moves to Salford testing in September, this aligns with all other schools in the cluster and means that our children will not be disadvantaged when moving to Brynteg. The school recently carried out a sample check across the whole school and the difference between the testing process resulted in big differences in results. The Head teacher had been concerned that Star Reader did not accurately reflect results across the school.

Governors asked if the school should just move to this testing for year 6 so they are not disadvantaged and stay with Star reader for the rest of the school.

The Headteacher responded that this would not provide an accurate picture, it would be very difficult to track, and so the whole school would move across to it.

Discussion was held around the volunteer reading team and the work they do across the school, the Headteacher confirmed that they come and read individually with children who are lower ability readers, the school welcomes this help and the children really enjoy it.

A governor asked how often testing would happen, the headteacher responded that it would be twice a year, in the Autumn and Summer terms.

The cost of the change was discussed and this would save the school around £3k per year.

Report Provided from the Outdoor Learning SIP Team, the full report is available to view in the school drive.

A brief overview was provided explaining that the team developed questions and met with Miss Hodgson to look at provision, whether there had been an audit of outdoor learning provision and whether training provision was in place.

They looked at the provision already in place, whether it was meaningful and purposeful and the planning that takes place. They also looked at challenges faced across the school.

Overall the Team were very impressed with provision and felt the foundation phase planned well and it was easy to learn.

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The older children it was not as easy however there were well planned timetabled events with Mr Murdoch that ensured outdoor learning did happen.

The team concluded that the learning lodge was not used as much as it should be and this should be encouraged, and felt that links with Newbridge Fields should be encouraged due to the locality and nature of the environment there.

The team felt that the school had raised its profile in this area, and learning walks are used to assess provision. Opportunities for enhancements will depend on future funding.

Year 6 were congratulated on their recent project with Swansea University where they specifically carried out a research project on Outdoor Learning. A video clip is available to view on the website.

The team were very impressed with outdoor learning in relation to real life events, such as shopping trips and a recent trip to a local building project. The school should be congratulated on making the most of every opportunity.

Report Provided from the Self Evaluation SIP Team, the report is available to view in the school drive.

An overview was provided, the team met to understand the current self evaluation process and identify gaps with the aim of providing support for improvement. The team looked at existing documents, critiqued a sample and then met with the Headteacher with a list of questions.

The MER is a working live document which provides an overview of everything and contains links to many other working documents. The team in particular looked at this to see how it fitted into the central framework and if there were any gaps. Following the meeting it was established that there are 8 key areas relating to learning and all the areas are supported with date, learning walks and observations along with book looks, this is put into the school self evaluation document and rag rated.

The team left the meeting with a lot of confidence in the schools work, for example a teacher had concerns regarding marking and setting challenge, this was recognised as a gap, and addressed at a staff meeting, teachers share good practice and governors were confident that if the teacher had not spoken up, the school would have picked this up through teacher observations and staff meetings.

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Overall governors were very happy that there is a robust framework in place across the school, staff are actively open to change and aware that improvements can be made.

No recommendations were made.

Report Provided from the Challenge SIP Team, this report will be available in the drive in the near future when the last step has been completed.

This team looked specifically at challenges across the school, an area which was highlighted in the recent Estyn Inspection.

The team linked with curriculum leads, had the opportunity to observe a class and had plans to meet with the junior leadership team to discuss challenge with the children.

The team met with Miss Matthews to establish how challenge has been set across the school to ensure that children reached their full potential. The team felt that Miss Matthews knowledge and passion was excellent, she explained how the school approached this, through planning and the choice of challenge, this encouraged children to be independent learners, samples of work were provided, along with examples of 'DIRT' and marking using 'Green for Growth'. Strong evidence was provided where challenge is apparent across the whole school.

The team had the opportunity to observe a year 4 class to see how the challenge worked in class. There was an excellent use of challenge, children were presented with three challenges and independent choice was encouraged and celebrated, children had excellent opportunities to work through the challenges. This encouraged confident independent choice, and support was provided as required. Differentiation was apparent throughout the whole lesson.

The next step is to meet with the junior leadership team to discuss how children felt this approach was working, hopefully this will be in the next few weeks.

The team were very impressed and felt the process was under constant evaluation, and was adjusted as necessary, for example a current trial was underway where instead of showing the challenge as 1,2 and 3 this was switched to 3,2 and 1.

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6. To receive the Report of the Headteacher

For Information	To be Actioned
To improve the provision of reading across the school to raise standards The school set clear and ambitious targets to raise standards in reading across all year groups. These targets focused on ensuring that a high percentage of pupils made measurable progress and that staff felt increasingly confident in delivering effective reading sessions. In Years 2 to 6, 91% of pupils made measurable progress in reading, exceeding the target set at the beginning of the academic year. This reflects a strong and consistent approach to reading instruction and intervention across the progression steps. Similarly, in Reception and Year 1, 90% of pupils made progress, meeting the expected benchmark and highlighting the effectiveness of early reading strategies and support. In addition to pupil outcomes, staff confidence in delivering reading sessions has significantly improved. This follows a series of professional development sessions focused on phonics, guided reading, and the use of formative assessment to inform planning. Staff have reported feeling more equipped to meet the diverse needs of learners and to deliver reading sessions with greater clarity and impact. Sharpen self-evaluation and improvement processes so that they impact more positively on the quality of teaching and learning We have successfully implemented a clear and streamlined self-evaluation framework across the school, utilising the @teb system. There is consistent and robust engagement in self-evaluation activities throughout the school. Staff actively participate in continuous review processes during regular staff and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meetings. Our Governors also play a crucial role, each taking responsibility for a specific area of the SIP and conducting their own monitoring, with findings regularly reported during full governing body meetings. Our improvement plan directly and clearly reflects the findings of our comprehensive self-evaluation. As evidenced within our Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review (MER) documentation, this plan is subject to regular review and updates. All relevant information and progress are transparently shared with both staff and Governors. Crucially, there is clear evidence of the significant impact of our improvement strategies on teaching and learning. This positive change is observable through the quality of children's work in their books, teaching assessments, and performance data. We are	Noted

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pleased to report a significant improvement in the overall quality of teaching and learning throughout this academic year.

To ensure teachers consistently provide appropriate challenges that engage and inspire all pupils to reach their full potential.

Our teaching staff consistently demonstrate increased confidence and enhanced skills in providing effective differentiation and challenge for all learners. Targeted professional development has significantly supported this, enabling staff to deepen their understanding of appropriate challenge and engagement strategies. Furthermore, dedicated staff meeting time has been established to ensure consistency across the school in our marking practices and the implementation of 'Green for Growth' comments.

We have a clear and comprehensive policy for challenge and differentiation that is well-understood and consistently implemented by all teachers. This policy provides a clear rationale for what 'challenge' looks like at Oldcastle, and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) actively collaborates with all staff to ensure school-wide consistency. Our 'Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time' (DIRT time) has had a demonstrably positive impact on challenging pupils' thinking, which is further developed through targeted 'Green for Growth' comments. Consequently, marking consistency across the school has significantly improved, with nearly all staff adhering to the established marking policy rigorously.

All teachers receive regular and constructive feedback and support to refine their practice in continuously challenging and differentiating instruction. Monitoring feedback is systematically shared with all staff, and bespoke support is provided for individuals with identified needs. Regular staff meetings review this feedback and collaboratively enhance teaching and learning strategies across the curriculum.

To promote outdoor learning experiences for all pupils

As part of our school improvement priorities, all Foundation Phase classes have reviewed and adapted their provision to ensure that outdoor learning is fully embedded across the curriculum and becomes an integral part of our daily teaching practice.

Across all Foundation Phase classes, teachers have worked collaboratively to map curriculum areas against opportunities for outdoor learning. This has led to purposeful, well-planned outdoor activities that link directly to areas of learning and experience, supporting pupils' development holistically. For example, storytelling, mark-making, and early reading activities have been extended outdoors, where pupils can engage with language and communication in a more natural and stimulating environment.

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Curriculum and Assessment (Shannon Matthews)

This term, the Curriculum and Assessment Lead has completed many monitoring activities, such as book looks, learning walks, and pupil voice, in line with the School Improvement Plan.

The Curriculum Lead has reviewed pupils' work in books, focusing on understanding pupils' perspectives on the level of challenge and engagement in their learning. Maths and challenge books were monitored. It was clear that challenge opportunities are increasing through "green for growth" questions, effectively stimulating learning and enabling pupils to progress.

There have been opportunities for the Curriculum Lead to conduct Pupil Voice interviews to understand pupils' perspectives on the level of challenge they felt within their learning. Open-ended questions were created for Years 1 to 6, which allowed pupils to explain how they feel when challenged, what challenge looks like for them, and how lessons can push their learning forward.

Alongside this, the Curriculum Lead has planned and delivered a staff meeting based on challenge and what this looks like in Oldcastle, which paid attention to the purpose of challenge, and the difference between feedback and feed forward in learning. Staff worked collaboratively to identify challenges put in place, next steps and scaffolding that could have been used to support learning.

Along with other members of the Senior Leadership Team, the Curriculum Lead has conducted learning walks this term, with a focus on lesson planning, delivery, and pupil engagement. These learning walks, while still ongoing, have allowed the Senior Leadership team to evaluate the extent to which teachers provide appropriate challenges that engage and inspire pupils.

ALN (Nia Vaughan)

There are currently nine pupils with school-based IDPs, with six applications for 1:1 ancillary support submitted this term to meet increasing individual needs.

Although no referrals for specialist placements have been made at this time, the ALNCo has submitted referrals to external services where needed to access additional advice and support for learners.

The CART (Cluster Additional Resource Team) has been involved this term, providing support for a number of children and their families. This input has strengthened the school's capacity to meet diverse needs through collaborative working.

Transition support for ALN learners has begun, focusing on preparing pupils and their families for changes over the summer and into the new academic year.

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The ALNCo has attended Local Authority ALNCo forums and cluster lead meetings, ensuring practices are kept up to date and aligned with national expectations. Regular collaboration with cluster ALNCos continues to support the sharing of resources and consistency of approaches across schools, especially in preparation for secondary transition.

ITE (Charlotte Ellett)

Staffing update

We were pleased to welcome Charlotte Ellett, who has taken over Rebecca's role. A smooth transition was ensured through a handover period at the end of the Spring term, allowing Rebecca to pass on responsibilities and provide valuable support as Charlotte settled into her new position.

Swansea University:

This term, we were delighted to welcome two new students from Swansea University: Elise Williams, who joined Shannon Matthews in Year 6, and Lois Taylor, who worked alongside Katie Lincoln in Year 4. Elise and Lois have both had their final observations, with Elise also being selected to be observed by the external examiner.

We also saw the successful conclusion of a research project led by Dr. Russell Grigg. Dr. Grigg introduced the initiative at the end of the Autumn term, aiming to engage primary students in the fundamentals of research. Working with Years 5 and 6, he guided them through the process of becoming young researchers. This programme not only enriched the students' learning but also contributed to the professional development of our teaching staff, aligning with the "schools as learning organisations" element of the professional teaching standards.

The project culminated in a proud moment for the school, as four Year 6 students were invited to Swansea University to present their research, share their findings, and discuss how they plan to apply what they've learned.

Dr. Russell Grigg expressed his delight with the outcomes of the project and the strong collaboration between the school and Swansea University. As a result, discussions are now underway to explore how this successful partnership can be further developed and expanded in the future.

University of South Wales (USW)

Following our initial Estyn visit during the Spring term, part of the University of South Wales (USW) inspection, where both the class mentor and a BA student were observed in their roles, we were delighted to welcome Estyn back once again. This time, the focus was on observing the PGCE student, Liam Jones, as he came to the

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end of his placement. Liam has been here since April and has been teaching in year 6 under the supervision of Jodie James.

- Noted

Attendance

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!
- Summer Term: Exceeded school target for 1 week, with only minor shortfalls (0.13 and 0.37) for two other weeks. Current attendance is 94.7%. This short half term's attendance was slightly lower due to many families taking authorised holidays.

Gender Breakdown:

- Girls: Their score improved from 93.7% to 94.5%, and they are currently at 94.6%. They are still below target but showing positive movement.
- Boys: Their score improved from 94.3% to 94.8%, and they are currently 94.9%. They are still slightly below target but showing positive movement.

Vulnerable Groups:

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

Governors asked how these figures compare to BCBC, the Headteacher stated that Oldcastle is amongst the top regarding attendance across BCBC and our EWO generally is very happy.

- Noted

School Performance and Targets

A discussion was held around school targets and performance a report was provided to the governors which is available to view in the school drive.

Generally Data is very good, staff have worked very hard, the books are looking fantastic and the data is improving day by day.

Health and Safety Report

S Peters provided an up to date Health and Safety Report following a walk around of the school with the Health and Safety Governor, this is available to view in the school drive.

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Careers Week

Careers Week was held from 16th to 20th June with the aim to inspire, motivate and educate children in the world of work. This was the fourth year that the school has developed a themed week based on jobs and careers. The classrooms and halls were buzzing with the sounds of future doctors, engineers, police officers, army musicians, designers, scientists and so much more, as our pupils explored the amazing world of work.

The week was all about opening our children's eyes to the vast array of possibilities and helping them understand that their interests and strengths today could lead to incredible careers tomorrow. The children in all year groups had a fantastic time learning about different jobs and the skills people use every day.

The children's enthusiasm and respect for all our visitors is commendable, with lots of interesting questions being asked! We were also lucky to receive a lovely video from past pupil, Joe Elliot, who is now a musician in the Irish Guards. We are very grateful for all the support we received from all of the organisations that supported the Careers Week. The school developed a webpage to showcase Careers Week and this was shared with parents.

The Headteacher thanks Sara Peters for all her work in connection with organising careers week, it is a lot of work and it would not be possible without Sara's commitment.

Budget

A period 3 budget has been received -

Budget Allocation	£1,604,342
Additional Income	£ 399,966
Underspend from previous year	£ 145,306
Total available	£2,149,614

Total Estimated Expenditure	£2,174,707
Estimated Deficit	£ 25,093

The school is working really hard to reduce this deficit and is micromanaging the budget in order to manage this.

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7. Private Funds Update

● For Information	● To be Actioned
<u>Oldcastle Primary School - Private Funds Update 11.6.2025</u> Committee Members Addell Whiteley Sara Peters Suzanne Evans HeadTeacher Deputy Headteacher Auditors Rachel Evans Katie Lincoln Final Sign off Headteacher and Chair of Governors All accounts have been audited and accounts submitted to the charity commission for the last school year and the half year accounts have been audited. Accounts <u>Private Fund</u> Balance £41,392, which consists of £10,000 reserve and funds in relation to swimming funds, residential funds, trip funds and rewards day funds. These funds are then transferred back to budget in April each year. The transfer in April 2025 was £29,793. <u>Music Fund</u> Balance £1,050, this holds current music funds until they are transferred to budget in April each year. The transfer in April 2025 was £8,188. <u>After School Club</u> Balance £2,342, this holds current ASC funds until they are transferred to budget in April each year. The transfer in April 2025 was £38,888. Governors commented that the remaining funds in Music and Afterschool Club seem lower than usual. This was confirmed, that yes both facilities will see an increase in fees in the coming school year, to ensure the clubs are sustainable moving forward. This year, both facilities collected sufficient funds to just about cover the costs, this was due to an increase in operating costs. The fees will increase by £1 per session in September, this will ensure future longevity of both clubs.	● Noted and Agreed

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8. Governor Training

For Information	To be Actioned
• A new training link has been sent out, please ensure you have booked a place and let AW know what training you are booked on. • Compulsory Training must be completed within the first year of service. Addell Whiteley will raise this with BCBC as there is one governor who has not completed training. • R Whitelock Completed - Compulsory Module 1 Compulsory Module 2 Understanding and promoting a culture of vigilance	•

9. Governor Vacancies

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• LW - LA Governor term ends on 18.7.2025, Addell Whiteley will send out the new LA Governor form for completion and submission.	• Noted

10. Elect a Chairperson for the school year 2025/2026

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• The Clerk asked for nomination or self nominations, Damian Faulkner was nominated for the role and was agreed by the FGB present.	• Agreed

11. Elect a Vic-Chairperson for the school year 2025/2026

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• The Clerk asked for nominations or self nominations, Heather Holder was nominated for the role and was agreed by the FGB present.	• Agreed

12. Establishment of Committees

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• Last year's committees were revisited and amended as appropriate. A new set of committees will be sent to LA for their records.	• Agreed

13. Establishment of Terms and Conditions

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• Last year's terms and conditions were revisited and amended as appropriate. A new set of terms and conditions will be sent to the LA for their records.	• Agreed

14. Register of Interests for the coming school year

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• This will be sent out in September to all governors to complete digitally.	• Noted

15. Planned Dates for the forthcoming school year

• For Information	• To be Actioned
<u>Governor Meetings School Year 2025-2026</u> Autumn Term Curriculum - Thursday 25.9.2025 Finance - Tuesday 14.10.2025 FGB and meet the parents event at 6pm - Wednesday 19.11.2025 Spring Term Curriculum - Thursday 29.1.2026 Finance - Tuesday 10.2.2026 FGB - Wednesday 18.3.2026 Summer Term FGB Budget Approval 12.05.2026 Curriculum - Thursday 11.06.2026 FGB - Wednesday 24.6.2024 FGB Housekeeping - Wednesday 8.07.2026	• Agreed

16. Governors Report to Parents (24-25)

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• See separate sheet, showing allocation of duties	• Noted and Agreed

17. Safeguarding

• For Information	• To be Actioned
• Moved to Private and Confidential	• Noted

18. AOB

• For Information	• To be Actioned
None	

The minutes are a true reflection of the meeting held on Wednesday 9/7/2025

Agreed

Name - HEATHER HOLLAND Date - 19/11/25

Signed - D. Faulkner

Damian Faulkner - Chair of Governors

Mrs Ceri Littlewood - Headteacher

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