Curriculum Committee Meeting for Oldcastle Primary School

15/10/26

Attendees
Ceri Littlewood, Lyndsey Hodgson, Charlotte Ellet, Damian Faulkner, Hannah Howe Evans, Lowri George, Laura Hocking, Megan Apsee, Liz Maddox, Shelley Williams, Rachel Evans, Ros Whitelock, Barrie Lewis, James Lewis.

1. **Apologies**

Angela Minton, Lynn Walters, Heather Holder, Ian Williams.

2. **To confirm the elected chair of the curriculum committee for the year 2026/2027.**

Damien Faulkner nominated Roz Whitelock. Roz agreed that she was happy to continue in the role if supported by the committee. The floor was opened for any additional nominations, but none were put forward.
Roz Whitelock was unanimously confirmed as the elected Chair for the forthcoming school year, and Addell Whiteley thanked Roz for her continued commitment and support.

3. **SIP and MER Update.**

The Headteacher reviewed the three primary focus areas of the School Improvement Plan (SIP): Curriculum & Adaptive Teaching, Phonics/Read Write Inc, and Trauma-Informed Practice:

- **Read Write Inc & Reading:** Read Write Inc has been reintroduced fully across the Foundation Phase. The school noted rapid early progress in sound recognition, addressing previous gaps where pupils struggled with fundamental sounds.
- **Trauma-Informed Practice:** Lyndsey, a qualified trauma-informed practitioner, delivered a twilight training session for staff. Additionally, a cluster INSET day took place at Brynteg featuring guest speakers Gail Shenton (enabling environments), Charlotte Clarke (trauma), Central South Consortium (CSC, adaptive questioning), and Google Tom (AI in lesson planning).
- **MER Process:** Self-evaluation was restructured to involve all staff and governors under the principle of "seeing the school through each other's eyes" across eight core monitoring areas. Monthly MLT and SLT sticky-note feedback sessions capture key evidence using three questions: *"How well are we doing? How do we know? Where do we go next?"*
- **Hybrid Class:** Positive feedback was highlighted regarding the upstairs hybrid classroom arrangement, noting that reduced class density at specific times allows targeted focus and reduces pressure on pupils.
- **Key Headlines & Governor Visits:** Key headlines under inspection areas are compiled for RAG rating. Information regarding Governor Open Day and upcoming SIP review meetings was shared.

4. **Teaching & Learning Model & Behavior Policy Update.**

Following a comprehensive reflection on behavior challenges from the previous academic year, leadership introduced several core updates.

- **Uniform Policy:** Re-emphasised school uniform guidelines to instill a sense of pride and belonging. The policy explicitly prohibits branded/designer hoodies (e.g. White Fox, high-end football shirts, Nike etc). The school maintains substantial spare uniform stock to assist any families in need.
- **Learn Model (L.E.A.N.):** Standardised pupil expectations posted across classrooms focus on: *Listen and learn, Engage positively, A pioneer, Reflect & retrieve, and Next steps*. Staff give explicit warnings referencing these criteria (e.g., *"You are receiving a warning because you are not engaging positively"*), creating consistency across class teachers, PPA staff, and cover supervisors.
- **Teaching Model:** Standardised teaching model poster, incorporates an "I do, We do, You do" framework with explicit teacher modelling using visualisers rather than presentation slides.
- **Ready to Learn Space:** Introduced for pupils who disrupt class learning. Pupils complete tasks with an adult outside the classroom and return once ready. The space has been used successfully only 3 times this term. The concept has also been extended to playtimes ("Ready to Play"). T

This approach has established a consistent message and fostered belonging, the school will continue to monitor the application and consistency of the Learn and Teaching models across all year groups.

5. **Curriculum Updates**

Charlotte provided an update on the implementation of the curriculum, which is anchored by three overarching pillars: *Belonging*, *Understanding the World*, and *The Power of Change*.

- **Immersion Week:** The Autumn term focused on *Belonging*. Each year group launched with a progressive framing question (e.g., Reception: *"How to express care for the living things around us and celebrate the stories that connect our families"*), prompting pupils to generate "I wonder" questions to guide termly inquiry.
- **Adaptive Curriculum Design:** Teachers adapt plans around pupil inquiry while ensuring core knowledge, skills, and progression steps are fully covered. Following teacher feedback, framing questions for the Spring term have been refined and narrowed, accompanied by 4 clear statements of intent per topic.
- **Practical Learning Impact:** Staff noted significantly higher pupil engagement. Physical dictionaries have been reintroduced across classes to teach alphabetical navigation, independence, and growth mindset.
- **Interactive Class Activity Example:** Year 5 conducted an interactive global trade and barter simulation across three classrooms involving flag stations, country wealth tokens, and trade negotiations, promoting active collaboration over passive online research.

In summary the new curriculum's Immersion Weeks and pupil-driven inquiry questions have increased practical engagement and curiosity across year groups.

6. **Digital Learning**

The Headteacher outlined a deliberate strategy to re-evaluate digital device usage across the school.

- **Pause on Unstructured Screen Time:** Leadership recognized that continuous Chromebook access had drifted into passive screen time/games rather than structured digital learning. Devices were temporarily paused to rebuild core concentration and classroom interaction.
- **New Policy Structure:**
  - *Nursery, Reception & Year 1:* No individual iPads or Chromebooks will be used going forward (unplugged digital learning such as Bee-Bots remains).
  - *Year 2 to Year 6:* Digital devices will be reintroduced strictly via scheduled, structured lessons focused on delivering the Digital Competence Framework (e.g., explicit IT instruction like spreadsheets).
- **Core Subjects:** Devices will not be used in general Literacy and Numeracy lessons unless there is a clear, explicit pedagogical purpose.
- **Parental Engagement:** The Headteacher plans to initiate parent discussions around screen time awareness and its cognitive impact on children.

This strategy will be reviewed regularly and linked alongside the digital competence framework.

Discussion was held around this and in general governors liked the strategy.

7. **Route to Growth & Community Capital Grant Applications**

Updates were provided regarding successful grant funding bids secured by the school:

- **Route to Growth Grant (£7,100):** Funding was secured to release Sinead one day per week to lead outdoor learning alongside Shelley. Shelley manages toddler groups, Language & Play sessions, coffee mornings, and targeted outdoor engagement programs for Pupil Development Grant (PDG) families.
- **Welsh Government Capital Grant (£25,000):** Working with the Local Authority, the school successfully secured a £25,000 capital grant. This capital funding will develop the upstairs room ('Hwb Room') and the downstairs community space to support Year 5 interventions, ALN and PDG parent groups, and a much broader range of community projects.
- **Next Steps:** To plan resource allocation, staffing adjustments and potential physical layout adaptations to ensure appropriate allocation of the funding.

8. **Any Other Business (AOB)**

The Chair asked if any attendees had additional business or items to discuss. No further business was raised.

Action Items for Next Meeting

Action Title	Description	Person Responsible
SIP Key Headlines	Upload the SIP key headlines summary to the Governor Drive	Headteacher
Digital Framework Scheme Rollout	Finalise the structured Digital Competence Framework teaching program for post-Christmas implementation.	Lauren Tompkinson and Ceri Littlewood .
Capital Grant Room Development	Coordinate room setup and equipment and staffing planning for the upstairs space and downstairs community room using the £25,000 capital grant.	Headteacher and staff involved in the programme
PDG Outdoor Family Program	Launch the expanded outdoor learning and community engagement sessions for PDG families.	Headteacher and staff involved in the programme

The minutes are a true reflection of the meeting

Signed Ros Whitelock Chair of Curriculum Committee 18·11·26· Date