Full Governing Body Meeting - Oldcastle Primary School - 8th of July, 2026

Attendees and role

- **Ceri Littlewood:** Headteacher
- **Damian Faulkner:** Chair of Governors
- **Heather Holder:** Vice Chair of Governors
- **Charlotte Ellet:** Governor
- **Lowri George** : Governor
- **Ian Williams:** Governor
- **Barrie Lewis:** Governor
- **Lyn Walters**: Governor
- **Laura Hocking**: Governor
- **Megan Apsee**: Governor
- **Ros Whitelock:** Governor
- **Rachel Evans:** Staff/Governor
- **Shelley Williams:** Staff/Governor
- **Liz Maddocks:** Governor
- **Lyndsey Hodgson**: Deputy Headteacher

Apologies

- **Hannah Howe-Evans**: Governor
- **James Lewis**: Governor

Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes from the previous Full Governing Body meeting held on the 12th of May 2026 were agreed, with no matters arising. All points of action have been carried out.

Headteacher's Report - A copy of the report is available in the Governor Drive

Data and Performance -

The school improvement report, provided by improvement partner Alison Jenner, is available for governors to review. Reading data is highly positive, with the vast majority of children making phenomenal progress relative to their chronological age. The school changed its reading test last year to align with the cluster and better identify reading difficulties, yielding excellent results.

However, spelling remains an area for development. Only 20 children across years 2 to 6 did not show progression, however progress is slower than the school would like, but the school is moving back to ReadWrite Inc and we should continue to see improvement.

The school had previously moved away from the Read Write Inc (RWI) program to a Core Knowledge approach just before the 2020 lockdown, which negatively impacted spelling outcomes. The school is fully reintroducing Read Write Inc from Nursery to Year 2 starting in September. All staff have recently received twilight retraining on how to use the RWI program.

Headteacher's Report continued-

Classroom Observations - A copy of the presentation is available in the Drive

The deputy and Headteacher observed 18 lessons during the summer term. Feedback was given within 24 hours focusing on strengths and areas for development, and this was followed up in writing. Strengths identified included high expectations, the "no opt-out" approach, effective questioning (prompting students for reasoning), "cold calling" (selecting pupils without hands up), and strong classroom routines. Areas for development include shifting to pre-planned diagnostic questions, sharpening success criteria ("what a good one looks like"), consistent use of mini-whiteboards to check for understanding, and adaptive teaching. Areas for development have been built into upcoming staff meetings for targeted training.

The process highlighted strong classroom routines and questioning techniques. Future staff training will focus on diagnostic questioning, adaptive teaching, and consistent checks for understanding.

Curriculum Changes - A copy of the presentation is available in the Drive

The school is launching a new inquiry-led curriculum focusing on student-generated questions while preserving core morning subjects.

The change will move from a content-driven curriculum to an inquiry-based model. The new school vision/"Why" is: "to ignite a lifelong level of learning, empowering every child to become a curious confident and resilient citizen". The curriculum will revolve around three terms/themes: Belonging (Autumn), Understanding the world around us (Spring), and The power of change (Summer).

Teachers will provide a framing question and host "immersion days" (3 days) at the start of the term where children explore topics rather than receiving direct instruction. Children will then generate "I wonder" questions, which teachers will use to plan their "big ideas" linking to the six Areas of Learning and Experience (AOLEs). Mornings will remain strictly protected for foundational Maths and Literacy instruction.

Governors expressed concern around the planning required for teaching staff around the new way of teaching, The Headteacher responded that they will plan weekly, but it will be as a result of the outcomes from the children, there should be no more additional work and the framing question will be quite specific.

A Governor asked how this will actually transfer to the classroom environment, the Headteacher responded that it will transfer very well, as Nursery to Year 2 can adapt this easily. Years 3 to 6 will require a change however all teachers have completed the adaptive teaching training and are fully committed to making it work.

Discussion was held around the additional skills that would be transferable to real life environments that could be taught by teaching in this way.

A Governor asked how this style of teaching would transfer to Brynteg, would our children be at a disadvantage. The Headteacher responded that Governors should

be mindful that the biggest chunk of learning around Numeracy and Literacy will be taught as it is currently being taught. The new style of teaching would only apply to the afternoon sessions. Brynteg teach in a very similar way, as there is a new Headteacher joining Brynteg in September there is likely to be change, however Oldcastle children will not struggle with this, as the aim is to build more independent learners.

Changes for Year groups 3 and 5 in September

To support students who missed key social milestones during the pandemic, Year 5 will trial a "Hub" with a dedicated Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) and designated zones (teaching, pre-teaching, sensory, and reflection). The aim of this is to provide space for the children to work, stretch their focus or just reflect.

Year 3 will experience a "hybrid" model with an extra classroom to aid the transition from the foundation phase into more formal learning. This will allow specialised transition and the opportunity to mix learning styles during this key year, where some children struggle.

Attendance - A copy of the presentation is available in the Drive

Attendance is currently very good, sitting at just under 95%. While some schools in the cluster report higher percentages. The primary cause for absences is term-time holidays. Attendance is continually monitored with the school's EWO and Lyndsey Hodgson.

Health and Safety - A copy of the report is available in the Drive

A grounds walkaround was completed. The site was found to be mostly fine, but there was some weed/tree growth from a chimney/gutter that needs attending.

Staffing and Finance

Budget 26/27	
Budget Allocation	£1,755,132
Estimated Income	£380,654
Carry Forward	£27,194
Total Expenditure	£2,290,223
Estimated Deficit	£127,263

Deficit Budget Plans - A copy of the report is available in the Drive

The school is facing a 6.82% budget deficit. Because this exceeds 5%, the school is required by the local authority to draft a 3-year deficit recovery plan. The deficit is not a result of internal financial mismanagement, but rather the compounding effect of external pressures—specifically, severe constraints on central funding and reductions in targeted educational grants.

The core funding we receive per pupil has not kept pace with the rapidly rising costs of running a school. Crucially, while our central budget and grant allocation may look similar to previous years on paper, in reality there has been a "real-terms" cut.

Furthermore, the school receives the lowest per-pupil funding in the borough and the 9th lowest in Wales, due to the low percentage of pupils qualifying for free school meals and the formula used to fund schools.

A recovery plan has been put in place details of which have been moved to the Private and Confidential section.

Policies - copies of all polices are available in the Governor Drive

Several policies required governor approval. These included the After School Club Policy, Biometric Data, Cyber Bullying, Freedom of Information, School Security Policy, and the School Medication Policy.

The policies have been vetted and updated by Judicium, the school's data controller. All policies were agreed upon by the governing body.

Chair and Vice-Chair Nominations for the coming school year

Damian Faulkner was nominated and seconded to continue as the Chair of Governors for the 2026/2027 academic year.

Heather Holder was nominated and seconded to continue as Vice-Chair for the academic year 2026/2027.

The school thanked Damian and Heather for their commitment over the last year and welcomed them back for the coming year.

Committee Structures - A copy of this document is available in the Governor Drive

Governor committees have been updated for the new academic year. This will be shared with all Governors in due course.

Terms of reference were updated and agreed upon.

Both documents will be shared with the LA.

SIP Targets and Linked Governors

The school has updated its self-evaluation document to align with Estyn areas. There are three School Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities for the coming year:

1) New Curriculum and Adaptive Teaching,

2) Re-introduce Read Write Inc

3) Develop a whole school Trauma-Informed Approach.

Governors selected which of the three target areas they will link to and monitor over the next year.

Meeting Dates -A copy of the schedule is available in the Governor Drive

Meeting dates for the 2026/2027 year have been uploaded to the drive. The pattern remains the same: Curriculum meetings on Thursdays, Finance on Tuesdays, and Full Governing Body on Wednesdays. Agreed by the FGB.

Any Other Business

Governor Departure: Nerys Sales term as a Community Governor has ended. The board expressed extreme gratitude for her long service, including her previous time as Vice Chair. The post of Community Governor will be advertised when the school returns after the summer break.

Actions for Next Meeting

Action Title	Description	Person Responsible
Grounds Maintenance	Arrange for weeds to be removed from roofline, by September 2026	Sara Peters
Community Governor Vacancy	Advertise the open Community Governor position following Nerys Sales' departure. Commence September 2026.	Addell Whiteley

The minutes are a true and accurate reflection of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on the 8th July 2026.

Signed .....
Damian Faukner

Date.....

Signed .....

Damian Faukner

Date 20/11/26