

VICTORIA COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL
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BOARD of GOVERNORS

21st October 2025

Together we aim for the stars

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors for Victoria School on
Tuesday 8th July 2025

Members Present

Cllr. Rhiannon Birch
Mrs Sam Davies
Mrs Laura Halliwell
Mrs Jennifer Hicks
Mr Simon Husband
Mrs Judith Jones

Mrs Cerys McDonald
Ms Nicola Moorhouse
Mrs Helen Moreton, Clerk
Mr Mark Petherick (Chair)
Dr Rhiannon Slade
Cllr. Mark Wilson (Vice Chair)

Apologies

Mrs Rebecca Connor
Mr Alistair Davey
Major David Emery
Mr Peter Hall
Mr Grant Robson
Mrs Jenine Sulley
Mrs Amy Warne Jones

Welcome

HM welcomed governors

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

MP was proposed as chair by JJ and seconded by CMcD; Cllr.MW was proposed by JJ and seconded by SH
MP welcomed the new parent governors, Mrs Jennifer Hicks.

Apologies were given and accepted by Governors.

Register of Interest

All governors had been contacted prior to the meeting by HM no updates/amendments had been received. JH was reminded to submit her form a.s.a.p.

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 8th July 2025

The minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on Tuesday were approved by JJ, seconded by LH and signed by the Chairperson. There were no matters arising.

Fixed Penalty Notices

This had been an agenda item at the previous meeting when governors were provided with information to read so that an informed discussion could take place. MP asked if there were any further questions or comments. NM raised a concern that if FPN's were adopted it could have an adverse impact on relationships with parents. By refusing to approve term-time holidays, the GB has already sent a clear message about prioritising attendance. Furthermore, she asked if the evidence proved the efficacy of them. CMcD stated that it had been a useful document to read, she asked

if many schools had adopted FPN's and raised concerns that it might disproportionately impact lower income families. **Cllr. RB** advised that FPN's were being introduced across the Vale, **SD** confirmed that all Penarth cluster schools have adopted them, however, she was unaware of any data to prove the impact. **SD** suggested that perhaps someone from the VOGC could attend the next GB meeting to provide further clarity.

SD said that she felt very strongly that if a child 'missed school, they missed out'. The change to the attendance policy regarding holidays has had a positive impact, a number of families were concerned that the absence would be unauthorised and that alone was enough for them to avoid holidays during term-time. Nevertheless, there were some families who persistently kept their children off school, not just for holidays and it was these families who might respond if there was a possibility of a FPN being served. **RS** stated that the school seems to be taking a graduated response, supporting and working with parents before escalating the approach. **SD** agreed, good relationships were key.

MP thanked governors for their input and asked if **HM** could arrange to invite someone from the Vale to attend the next GB meeting

Community Foundation

GR had circulated this before the meeting. **CMcD** advised that it was worth exploring but it was a considerable amount of work, she and **GR** will investigate further and report back at the next GB.

School Improvement Plan and Self Evaluation Report

The SIP had been circulated to all governors prior to the meeting, everyone was aware of the four priorities for this year which are:

Priority 1

To further enhance teaching and learning so that pupils are provided with increased opportunities and purposeful feedback to reflect on progress and develop a growth mindset.

Priority 2

To introduce reciprocal reading so that pupils are provided with meaningful opportunities to develop effective reading skills, through a collaborative approach.

Priority 3

To build staff confidence in their use/teaching of Welsh so that at least 15% of learner's activities throughout the day will be in Welsh.

Priority 4

To ensure that teaching is well matched to pupils with additional learning needs and based on a secure understanding of their needs.

SD stated that it was important that the GB understood how the priorities had been identified. On the final INSET day in July staff completed a 'mentimeter', and made judgements and evaluations against the ESTYN framework. Over the summer **SD** had evaluated the responses (which she shared with the GB) and emerging priorities were identified. Every INSET relates to one of the four priorities, staff have access to an e-portfolio where evidence can be recorded. Lesson observations have taken place and it was noted that reciprocal reading has been introduced. The Welsh target of 15% is ambitious, but **SD** said that it was important to have high aspirations. The school is due to be evaluated for the silver Welsh award having already received the bronze. LSA's have attended a Welsh course so that they can introduce games in Welsh on the playground, some staff are currently undertaking Welsh courses. The governors were reminded that the SIP is a 'live' document, in addition to the main priorities there are subsidiary action plans. It is reviewed every half term and shared with all staff.

SD then shared the self-evaluation process. The school vision and school aims have been updated.

CMcD commented that the SIP was very detailed and it was good to see the methodology. Several parent governors shared that their children were using growth mindset vocabulary.

GB Mentimeter Results

At the GB meeting in April the previous school improvement partner, Claire Skidmore had delivered an informative session on the roles and responsibilities of governors. Following that the GB had undertaken a learning walk and met with AoLE leads. Results of the governor Mentimeter showed that some governors wanted more feedback from committee meetings for example the finance committee.

MP suggested the following **Action Plan**:

1. Following the next finance committee there would be more detailed feedback
2. A small governor working party would be established to ascertain how the governors can be more visible in school

Head teacher Report

This had been circulated prior to the meeting, **SD** highlighted the following:

Pupils and Class Organisation

Numbers in Nursery, Reception and YR1 remained low, however, after half term we would be full from YR2-YR6 as some new families were joining the school.

AoLE's

SD suggested that the GB contacted their respective AoLE leads and arranged a suitable time to meet with them during the next half term.

Attendance

Attendance rates are excellent at 97% - this is well above the mean average of Vale Primary Schools. One pupil is on a reduced timetable and five children attend part time specialist provision. **SD** commented that this was extremely difficult to manage, the children are in different settings on different days, there is no school transport available, therefore **SD and Jayne Hall (ALNCO)** are transporting the children on some days. Furthermore, the school has to send LSA's to accompany them which is an additional burden on the school budget.

Checking and Evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning

This term, the ALNCo and HT have observed every teacher (pupil voice, learning walk, books and planning). Teaching is at least good across the school, with pockets of excellence. Support staff work skillfully to deliver interventions and support teaching, and pupils' behaviour for learning is good. The focus of improvement will be to ensure that all ALN needs are catered for.

A learning walk will be carried out before the end of term by HT and SLT member to look at consistency of practice.

Pupil progress meetings will be held with every class teacher during this term, to evaluate the progress pupils have made and the impact of interventions. Any child not making expected progress will be put on a monitoring list and additional interventions planned.

The SER (self-evaluation report) has been updated to reflect findings and ensure an ongoing cycle of review.

The new Improvement Partner (Sue Prosser) has been in to visit to familiarise herself with the school. She will carry out joint monitoring activities with the SLT in the Spring Term.

Premises

The new canteen is nearing completion but it has not been without its challenges, it is due to be completed during half term. Unfortunately, the playground has taken a hit during the building work, and we will require new playground markings, and the sensory garden will need to be reinstated.

Over the summer holidays, the KS2 toilets were replaced, and all leaks have been repaired. In addition to this, the alarm system was replaced throughout the school.

Support Services

Cleaning services are good.

Whilst we appreciate that a delay to the canteen has resulted in a disruption to lunches provided, we have made several complaints to Big fresh about the quantity of food served. They have sent a member of their staff to carry out a report, and we are awaiting the results. In the meantime, our School Council will be carrying out a lunch survey, and we will forward the results to Big Fresh.

Budget

The budget currently has a deficit of 620k. The need for an increase in support staff is an additional costing, due to the complex needs of some of our pupils.

Headteacher continues to work with Welsh Government to secure more income. The Deputy Headteacher continues with his role as verifier, which also secures additional income.

The school is part of several working parties which provide additional income and support professional learning.

We continue to apply for grants to improve provision and have recently secured a grant from Tesco to fund an anaphylaxis kit.

NM asked if a recovery plan is needed, **SD** confirmed that one has been submitted and that currently there are 10 schools in the VOG who are under close scrutiny due to their deficits.

SD advised that the bulk of spending was on staffing and that if a child needed 2:1 support because of their complex needs that equates to £50,000. There are several children who should not be in mainstream school but there is no specialist provision available.

Events

SD reminded governors that there are lots of lovely events planned and they are always welcome to attend – it was important for staff to see the GB as a visible presence.

Data

SH gave a presentation on data and how the children were assessed throughout the year and also by Welsh government.

SD said that analysis had verified that there were no groups that didn't perform as well as any other.

Finance & Personnel Committee

MP advised that the committee had met in September, the deficit was challenging but resources were being effectively managed. As agreed earlier, following the next finance meeting there would be a full report back to GB.

Health & Safety Committee

SD reported that the scheduled meeting had been postponed however, she could report that a lockdown drill had recently been held, and the children were exemplary. A fire drill is planned for later this term when the new canteen is open. There have been no major accidents reported.

The Vale Health & Safety officer had been invited to visit the school to advise on the security of the site. He had confirmed that as a mainstream school it was as secure as it possibly could be. His only recommendations were concerning the fire door from the Rainbow room which gave children easy access onto the yard and a gap in the nursery fencing.

Safeguarding

JJ reported that as reported the recent lockdown drill had been successful and no areas of concern identified. Individual risk assessments have been updated for pupils whose behaviours are considered potentially unsafe for themselves, peers or staff.

All school staff had updated Level 1 safeguarding and Prevent training in September. All LSA's and specific year group staff have received Epilepsy training from an Epilepsy Specialist Nurse.

5 pupils are attending joint placement in specialist provision.

1 pupil with LA maintained IDP is attending mainstream school until specialist provision can be allocated

1 pupil is attending school on a flexi-school plan whilst waiting for 2nd reconsideration request.

1 pupil is being supported on site by Smooth Starts Plus Provision via the Social and Emotional Mental Health Panel

1 new referral has been made to the Inclusion and Reintegration panel for Smooth Starts Provision.

1 pupil has been excluded on 2 occasions this half term.

Support from a number of external agencies has been accessed

JJ advised that she was due to meet with the ALNCO in the next half term.

Policies

The updated Staff Disciplinary Policy and School Professional Development Review Policy were agreed and adopted by the GB. The School Professional Development Review Policy had been discussed in detail at the personnel committee and they were satisfied that its implementation would not result in additional workload for staff.

Correspondence

HM reminded that governor training courses were available via governor support.

Any other Business

MP stated that the existing committee structure would be circulated to governors, if they wanted to move to a different committee they should inform **HM** by 7th November. The committees operated under the current terms of reference.

HM reminded governors that they should attend training courses that were relevant to the committee they sat on so that informed decisions could be made.

SD said it would be useful to circulate a glossary of terms – **HM** will action.

Matters Confidential

None

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 10th February at 5.00PM

AoLE leads will contact governors with available dates, all governors to meet with their leads prior to next GB meeting.