



OLCHFA SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY
Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting
held in the Library at 5.15 pm on Wednesday 19 November 2025

Present	Dr Mahaboob Basha Mrs Jennifer Howells Mrs Beverley Jones Cllr Mary Jones Mr Matthew Jones Mr Julian Kennedy	Mrs Hannah Lake Mrs Kathryn Novis Mr Damian Rees Mrs Suzi Smith Mr Ian Stewart
Apologies	Ms Rosina Colasanto Mr Gareth Jones Cllr Jeff Jones Mr James Ellis	Mrs Aderinola Omole Mrs Hannah Vincent Ms Lynda Westhead
In attendance	Mrs Jen Thompson, Acting Deputy Headteacher Mrs Jan Platt, Clerk Ruby Rowlands, SAB Clara Suve, SAB	

		ACTION
	The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. She informed Governors that Cllr Mike Day was standing down as a Governor after a long tenure. She would write to him on behalf of the Governing Body. She explained that the election of a new Parent Governor would take place in the New Year.	Chair
FGB25.26	Apologies	
1	Apologies were received and accepted from those named above.	
FGB25.27	Update from SAB	
2	The Chair welcomed Clara and Ruby who presented a comprehensive update on School Advisory Board activities.	
2.1	SAB Structure: New SAB members had been recruited and were now present on SAB and its sub-committees.	
2.2	Community Group: Plans included supporting the local food bank, announcing annual charities, the Stocking Appeal for Ty Olwen, a community day to foster Cynefin and an Easter Egg drive for Ty Olwen.	
2.3	Communication Group: The group had focused on improving communications between the SAB and the wider school, including a suggestion box and reintroducing the SAB TV update (for which they were currently sourcing funding).	
2.4	Teaching & Learning Group: Initiatives include weekly achievement point certificates for Year 7 and 'learning theme weeks' to push certain subjects and achievement points. They were also helping in expanding the iExplore curriculum.	

- 2.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Activities included Black History Month, a Christmas card design competition, a Culture Week, advertising the Eid celebratory menu and improving LGBTQ+ Pride Month and Wellbeing Fair events. Mr Kennedy noted that Estyn had been particularly impressed with the Wellbeing Fair and the sophisticated pupil discussions which were taking place.
- 2.6 The Chair thanked Ruby and Clara for the update and they left the meeting at 5.45 pm.
- FGB25.28 Minutes of the previous meeting (Wednesday 17 September 2025) and matters arising**
- 3 The minutes were agreed to be a true record. There were no matters arising.
- FGB25.29 iExplore**
- 4 Mrs Thompson presented on iExplore. The main points are summarised below:
- 4.1 **Context:** iExplore had been born out of the school's curriculum journey, leading from 'Successful Future's to 'iLearn'. It was specifically developed in 2018 to make Year 9 distinct in terms of offering a point of difference and helping students to make informed option choices.
- 4.2 **Structure:** Students choose from 24 elective courses designed by Learning Managers and their teams, covering different areas of learning (eg Environmental Science, Fun Maths, Forensics, Web Design). Students make two choices: one for the period up to February half term and one for the period after.
- 4.3 **Criteria:** Courses must link to the core curriculum but go beyond lessons, developing skills like leadership.
- 4.4 **Implementation:** Early data collection in Year 8 is used with a 'sorting hat' system to maximise first and second choices, then staffing is worked out flexibly.
- 4.5 **Impact:** Monitoring shows Year 9 Attitude to Learning (ATL) data in iExplore is very high. Parents and students value it for enrichment and wellbeing. Estyn inspectors had been very interested in iExplore.
- 4.6 **Feedback:** Students would like more iExplore in Years 10, 11 and Sixth Form. The ethos strongly reflects the Cynefin principles with 'joy' being particularly evident.
- 4.7 The Estyn report would be published the following Monday. After this, Mrs Thompson would share her presentation and booklet with Governors. Governors gave credit to staff for creating the courses and the importance of teacher autonomy was noted.
- FGB25.30 Thematic Observations and Pupil Progress**
- 5 Mrs Thompson said that a new approach to professional expertise was being explored where SLT visit lessons for 15-20 minutes focusing on a key theme (eg 'lines of enquiry'). Findings would be

	triangulated with other data and shared with Governors in due course. In terms of pupil progress, documents and a diagram for professional learning would be developed which would capture and share good practice.	ACTION
5.1	Governors commented that this was exciting work and they were grateful to all staff concerned. The chair thanked Mrs Thompson for her comprehensive presentation.	
FGB25.31	All Wales Core Data Sets	
6	Mr Kennedy presented the performance data for summer 2025. The main points were:	
6.1	Context: The school was the third least challenged in the family of schools. The school's FSM was lowest in the family. 9.2% of pupils were drawn from the most deprived areas, which indicated that aspirational families were putting their children in Olchfa.	
6.2	Attendance: Attendance stood at 92.2%, which was 1.6% above the model. This was pleasing overall but, like all schools in Wales, attendance had not returned to pre-pandemic levels.	
6.3	Capped 9 performance: The school was exceeding expectations with 408.1 points (c 28 points above the family model of 380.1) which is over half a grade higher per subject.	
6.4	Prior ability: The school was performing above modelled outcomes across all three prior ability ranges (high, middle and low) showing a commitment to all students.	
6.5	Male/Female Difference: The school had the biggest difference in the performance of boys and girls in the family. This was an emerging trend that would require careful thought. In answer to a question from Mr Stewart regarding contacting other schools to ascertain why they were doing better, Mr Kennedy said that data going forward would help and he thought this might be a statistical quirk.	
6.6	FSM vs non-FSM: FSM students were performing well (56 points above the family average). This was over a grade higher than the rest of the family but there was still a gap between boys and girls which would remain a strategic focus.	
6.7	Skills Challenge Certificate (Welsh Baccalaureate): Students were achieving one grade better than the rest of the family.	
6.8	Literacy Indicator: The school had the highest score across the family but the male/female difference was greatest in literacy. The school was working on triangulating data with other scores in order to improve in this area.	
6.9	Numeracy Indicator: Olchfa was top of the family and the male/female difference virtually eliminated in this area.	
6.10	Science Indicator: This was above the model with a male/female gap half that of literacy. 5A*-A percentage: 41.1% of pupils achieved 5 A*-A (versus the 21.3% modelled). 16% of FSM students achieved this (versus 5.5% family average). Estyn had been impressed with this data.	

- 6.11 Mr Kennedy said that a definite emerging problems with boys' literacy had been identified and the school would be putting in place interventions to address this issue.
- FGB25.32 Headteacher's Report**
- 7 Governors had received the Headteacher's report which was self-explanatory.
- 8 Mr Kennedy mentioned that a safeguarding situation was being addressed with the Director of Education. He would update Governors in due course.
- 9 Mr Kennedy invited Governors to attend the Carol Concert on Tuesday 16 December at 7 pm in the Minster.
- FGB25.33 To note the date of the next meeting - Wednesday 21 January 2025**
- 10 Governors noted the date of the next meeting.
- 11 There being no further business, the Chair thanked all for attending and the meeting concluded at 7.05 pm.