



## Parent Council Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018

### Head Teacher Report

#### 1. Staffing

Since the last HT report we have welcomed Miss Kilgour on a permanent basis to our Modern Languages team, and Mr Stevenson (already with us as a long term temporary member of staff) and Mr Combe both to PE on a 'permanent to the authority' basis. Our nurture keyworker Miss Currie starts today (19<sup>th</sup> February). Finally, I am delighted to let you know that Miss Montgomery was appointed full time and permanent to Johnstone High School on 16<sup>th</sup> February. Miss Montgomery is dual qualified in Modern Studies and History and also leads our Duke of Edinburgh programme in the school.

As I indicated to you in November, staffing remains a challenge to Johnstone High School, alongside neighboring schools and further afield at a national level. We are currently experiencing ongoing issues in the following areas: RE; Maths; English; and Technical. I can assure parents that both the school and the Council are doing all we can to rectify this and I recently appointed a Technical supply teacher on behalf of the local authority. I am hopeful this teacher will be supporting us soon.

Again, as I have mentioned previously, we rotate classes and prioritise certificated (SQA) classes, particularly as their exams are nearing. This means that no one class is without specialist teaching input.

Finally, I am sure you are now aware that Mrs Sturgeon DHT has been appointed as Head Teacher of Drumchapel High School in Glasgow. Mrs Sturgeon takes up her post on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> March and we will miss her terribly, but wish her well in her headship. This of course means there will be a substantive DHT vacancy. This has been advertised and closed on 16<sup>th</sup> February. I will be in touch in due course around parent council members supporting the assessment centre recruitment process.

#### 2. School Life - Pupils

It is through the termly newsletters and our regularly updated twitter feed that parents and friends of the school can get a real flavor for the variety of events and opportunities that are available for our young people. Here is a snapshot of what has been going on over the last few months:

- Gathering the Voices (holocaust awareness) assembly, class inserts and exhibition
- Prior to Christmas I consulted with the pupils and as a result made the decision to change the operating procedures for the pupil toilets so that these are no longer locked.



- Christmas jumper day and a non - uniform day in support of our 4 house charities (Renfrewshire Foodbank ; St Vincent's Hospice, Finding Your Feet and RAMH, a mental health charity)
- Our successful school show 'High School Musical' on 13-15 December which had a predominantly junior school cast
- Our seniors collected items and then distributed Christmas parcels to local people at the end of term
- Christmas assemblies with Dougie Adam from our Chaplaincy team
- The second inter-house games on the last day of the Christmas holidays was a huge hit with pupils and staff alike
- Skills Development Scotland (the careers service) have been in to train pupils from S5 and S6 to become My World of Work (MyWOW) ambassadors. They are supporting younger pupils in this school (and the primaries) and are taking parents through the MyWOW programme at parents' evenings
- We have had assemblies for pupils on our behavior management policy, on school values (trust), on health matters, options (the 'dummy run' assemblies) and from the Forestry Commission. The pupil council have also spoken to their peers to let them know about the improvements the pupil council have made in the school e.g. pupil toilets and a water cooler in PE.
- We held a very successful 'STEM' careers day on the 31<sup>st</sup> January and this was well supported by external STEM ambassadors and business / HE / FE partners.
- Similarly, the Languages in Work morning for S3 on 8<sup>th</sup> of February also had a range of employers and keynote speakers in to reinforce the importance of languages in the modern work environment.
- S5 have had a 'keep safe' morning with information to support them to make positive, safe choices around drugs and alcohol from partners such as Community Safety, Police, the Fire Service and Community Learning and Development.
- Over 50 pupils in S3 applied to be part of the Columba 1400 experience (Skye residential) in March. Liam from Columba 1400 has been in to meet the 30+ pupils who got through the stage one process. Today (19<sup>th</sup> Feb) these 30+ pupils will go through an assessment centre / interview programme to get us to the final 15 who will go to Skye on 11<sup>th</sup> March. More to come on this on at the next PC meeting in June.



## 4. School life – parents

The following parents' evenings have taken place since the last PC meeting:

- S5/6 parents' evening in November
- S3 parent's evening in December
- S2 parents' evening in January

I can safely say for all three that poor weather and football on TV (!) didn't impact on parent attendance and each was productive with positive feedback either verbally or through evaluation cards. As a result of a PC suggestion, Mrs O'Malley continues to have a table set up to support parents with Show My Homework and to help download the school app. She also has a set of 'roving' pupil volunteers, complete with ipads and we are now supplementing this with the My World of Work Ambassadors who have set up a station of laptops at all of our recent parent evenings.

*\*Please note that the S1 parents' evening is in April 2018. I know that this has been a concern for some S1 parents. Our school calendar is consulted on each year and this includes a group of parents who agree the dates before the calendar goes to print. Staff are contracted for 6 evenings per year – one per year group, plus either the options evening or P7 Open Evening. We made the decision for April in S1 because October/ November would mean approx. 15 months between the S1 parents' evening and the S2 parents' evening which is typically held in January/February of S2 to coincide with options. Moreover, we made sure that there was parental communication for through a tracking report (Sept) and a report card (Jan). **If any S1 parent has a concern about their child's progress, at any time, please do not hesitate to get in touch with your child's pastoral support teacher.** We will consult with P7 parents this year about the S1 parents' evening for the calendar next session as it is their children this impacts on.*

Other events for parents have included:

- The Parent Council reintroduced the Christmas Craft Fayre on 29th November. A massive effort from all who took part in whatever role, but it resulted in a truly special evening that showed how much the school has moved forward and is engaging with the local community. My personal thanks (again!) to all involved.
- Sent out questionnaires for parents in November and as a result I offered a drop-in session on for parents on 13th December to discuss any issues parents wished to raise. Only one parent came, therefore I took that as a



measure that parents feel they can lift the phone there and then when something is a concern.

- I ran a consultation session for parents on 29th January on our new 'Respect for All' (anti-bullying / equalities) policy. This was extremely well attended and the comments made on the evening were taken on board and included in the finalised version of the policy. My thanks to those who came along.
- S2-5 options evening for pupils and parents 31<sup>st</sup> January – this has really taken off in the school and I hope that the initial presentation and then opportunity to chat with staff from across the subjects gives parents the support and reassurance they need to support their child through the options process

Finally, I am sure you are aware that we are trying hard to inform parents about school life through electronic means. We are regularly inputting into our twitter feed, using our school app and Show My Homework. We have also refreshed our website. The new format went live on January and I am delighted with it. It is much more user-friendly and has a host of documents that may be of interest to you. It is also where we store our newsletters, and I do hope you have had the chance to catch the Christmas edition.

## **5. School Improvement Agenda**

Peter Macleod, Director of Children's Services led a group of local (multi-party) ward councillors in a visit to the school on 21st November. They were treated to a tour of the school by seniors and afternoon tea from the S4 Hospitality class. I then presented to them on the life and work of the school and the improvements that we have made, particularly around our results. The group were impressed with the school and the young people and we received very supportive letters from some of the elected members thanking the school for their visit.

Our Education Manager at HQ, Maureen Sneddon, came into school on Monday 13th November and Monday 4th December to have an independent, external focus on our two whole school priority areas of health and wellbeing and learning and teaching. She carried out learning walks in classrooms, met members of the SMT, PTs and focus groups of pupils. Her feedback was very positive and she agreed with our evaluation of our strengths and ongoing improvement areas.

In November 2017 we undertook a self-evaluation exercise using questionnaires, parental drop in and focus groups of young people. It also formed the basis of a staff after school session and an extended management team meeting (PTs and SMT). This has been a worthwhile process as we hear the views of everyone in the school



and will support us as we welcome Education Scotland on 26<sup>th</sup> February. I will speak about this at the Parent Council meeting.

In November/December myself and Mr Menzies DHT met with every curricular PT to discuss curriculum we offer in the Broad General Education. This has proven to be a very useful exercise as we explored with the PTs their review of their departmental offer from S1 onwards, which is shaping the direction for a more meaningful choice process for S3 as they move into the Senior Phase.

Finally, we have been allocated £104,000 Pupil Equity Fund money from Scottish Government for session 2018/19.

## **6. Press**

We have had some lovely coverage in the press about our parcels for the elderly at Christmas, our activities during anti-bullying week and also our Hearty Lives project and work we are doing alongside the canteen staff.

## **7. Updates on building improvement**

We have created a support base beside Learning Support for young people who require time out of class, for whatever reason. This is staffed by SMT and the Pupil Support team and is also being used as an alternative to formal exclusion from school. The Nurture base is finished and we now have our staff in place. The pupil groups in S1-3 have been identified and this week we will be welcoming parents in a doors open afternoon. As per feedback from the pupil council, a watercooler has been ordered for the PE department.

Finally, the courtyard is the area of the school that is next in line for a facelift, thanks to the parent council. Mrs Spence and other members of the 'funding subgroup' will update you on the plans at the PC meeting.