



JOHNSTONE HIGH SCHOOL

Parent Council Meeting 25th April 2016

Acting Head Teacher Report

1. Staffing

We currently have a number of posts advertised / ready for interview at the moment, these include class teacher posts in History, Modern Studies and PE. I am also looking to internally appoint to increase capacity in Learning Support next session.

We continue to work with the local authority around staffing for next session and Mrs Sturgeon will go into more detail on this when she speaks about timetabling at the PC meeting. In terms of absence, we currently have absence in PE and Music. We continue to work with the authority to obtain supply staff whenever we can.

Finally, I am delighted to let you know that Mrs Coyle was successfully appointed to PT Modern Languages at Clydebank High School. She starts her new post after the May holiday. This is the day we welcome our new Faculty Head of Science, Ms Chalmers, formerly of Mearns Castle. We also congratulated Mrs Allan in our school office on her retirement on the 1st of April; she will be very missed by staff and pupils alike.

2. School life

Since the last HT report in February the key focus for seniors has been on the 'big push' towards exams. Supported study and Easter school have both taken place and a targeted group of students have been mentored to give them focused support.

PTs of Pastoral Support have carried out their options interviews with students S2-S5 and Skills Development Scotland supported the S3 interviews. Our hope is that pupils and parents are well informed when they make their choices. The majority of feedback around the process was positive and Mrs Sturgeon has working with the small number of pupils whose options have proven to be more challenging.

In late March / early April I met the year groups via assemblies (at time of writing I still have to meet with S2) to carry out the first exercise around vision, values and aims. I spoke to the pupils about the importance of 'brand' and marketing, then moved onto core values. Each pupil was asked to select their top five values for the school. These have been collated. My intention is to now meet with the parent focus group to discuss scoping parental views on values (and then also the aims and vision) and I will also work with the staff at the May in-service day on this. My hope is that at the end of the process we have six agreed and shared school values. Early indications from the pupil vote are very heartening.

During these assemblies I also took the opportunity to survey pupils on extra-curricular activities. I asked the pupils what they do inside of school, outside of school, for any particular achievements that they are proud of (personal achievements or even representing school/district/country). I also asked about activities they would like on the programme next session, and if there are any barriers that prevent them from taking part in activities. The point of this survey is to identify pupil talents and achievements so these can be acknowledged and celebrated, look at our programme for next session to make sure it better meets pupil interests, and also to look at the barriers to see if there are things we can put in place to alleviate these. These questionnaires are being processed by our school office and may take some time, however this is a worthwhile exercise that we will repeat annually so we can track and support pupils with extra-curricular activities (mindful that some pupils don't wish to take part, very much their personal choice and we respect that).

In April our community officer, Sergeant Petrie, came into school and met with pupils at assemblies (excluding second year; this will be rescheduled). He spoke to the pupils about a range of topical and important matters ranging from the dangers of drink driving (and being a passenger) with seniors through to safety online and antisocial behaviours. For some of the assemblies Sgt Petrie was able to bring the police dog and the handlers in to meet the pupils and explain the important work they do in our community. The dog is trained to sniff out explosives, cash, drugs and firearms. The dog was an instant hit with the pupils and performed a training exercise using our staff as a 'line up'.

3. Pupil Events

On 22nd February Renfrewshire Council's voting team came to visit S5/6 to encourage them to be registered to vote in the forthcoming elections.

Led by the PE department and Mr Connelly, a number of sporting activities and fundraising activities such as the S6 Olympics took place for Sports Relief. Similarly, world book day events in the school, led by Mrs Haggerty, included staff dressing up, an organised whole school 'big read', a reading themed coffee morning hosted by

ASDAN pupils, and the school took part in a world record attempt for completing a quiz alongside pupils across the country. Well done to all and an impressive £190 was raised for charity.

March also saw a the blood transfusion service visit the school, and the REACH project meet with over 40 pupils in S4/5 who have indicated that they want to study the traditional professions including medicine and law. Our pupils impressed, particularly the girls wanting to go into engineering (helped by Dr Costello's STEM event in February). Annie rehearsals are also well under way.

The final big pupil event of this term was on 31st March. The pupil organised and run S5/6 spring dance was festival themed and has very much set the scene for the senior prom in June.

4. Parent events

The S3 parents' evening took place on 10th March and had 74% turnout. Comments from the feedback cards included:

- *Well organised. Everyone very pleasant and helpful.*
- *All appointments ran on time which was good. No other matters.*
- *Enjoyed feedback from all teachers, all teachers very helpful and understanding.*
- *I think this is a good way to find out how my child is doing and how I can help my child improve.*
- *Very well organised! Especially the girls on the door!*

A very small number of negative comments focused on appointments running over and having the need to move from classrooms to the assembly hall. We take these comments on board but struggle to provide a solution, given the available time and accommodation.

The next parent events will be the focus group around the school values, then we welcome P7 parents later in the school term.

5. School Improvement Agenda

We have now caught up with our PT / SMT meetings and all January and March meetings have taken place. All departments have submitted their progress update for their department improvement plans (DIPs) and there are no concerning issues – all is on track. The focus for departments in the summer term is ongoing curriculum development, finishing off classroom observations, carrying out staff professional development reviews and looking at next year's department improvement plans.

The Maths and Pupil Support departments closer look reviews are now completed – the departments are writing up their action plans and these will dovetail into their improvement plans next session.

From a whole school point of view, we are next meeting with the local authority ‘team around the school’ on 26th April. Good progress is being made with this plan and the authority continue to express confidence in our work. We met with council officers on 30th March to look at the February update for Insight; again, satisfied with our progress around school improvement and attainment, ‘closing the gap’ and positive destinations.

We are also working with our primary cluster colleagues and will be reviewing our arrangements for curricular transition moving forward – Johnstone High will host primary HT colleagues in May to work with our PTs of English and Maths to look at how we can improve upon current practice.

Finally, the month of March saw a number of visitors come to school: Gordon McKinley, Head of Schools on 7th March, Shona Taylor, HMle, on the 11th of March, and Peter MacLeod Director of Childrens Services on the 16th of March. I am delighted to tell you that all three, having each spent at least two hours with us, were very positive about the school, the staff and most importantly, our young people. Shona met a focus group of seniors and was very impressed. She started her career in the nursery sector, here in Johnstone and knew some of our pupils from when they were little! Consensus is that Johnstone High School knows itself and is in a good position to move forwards.

6. Press

Thanks to Miss Carswell and her team of students for more positive entries in the Gryffe Advertiser. Moreover, we have also enjoyed two great articles in the Gazette around the planning and preparation for the 50th anniversary celebrations. The S6 girls who have led this, alongside Mr Munro, have been fabulous ambassadors for the school.

7. Pupil Communication

We now have a weekly school bulletin for pupils and this is put out on a Friday each week. We have an identified notice board in the pupil foyer area outside the canteen. We also put it on our twitter feed and are exploring other social media methods of getting this to pupils. We are planning to put out a summer term newsletter in the next couple of weeks.

8. Front of school Project

Each month there is another development in the front of school project. The painting is almost complete (the replacement doors are the final things to be painted) and the front garden has been landscaped. The new reception desk is in place; we're now waiting on the remaining furniture and chairs for the foyer. We are also waiting for a quote for freshening the front of the building and we require a new sign above the main entrance.

Also, the dance studio has now been signed off and handed over to us which is fantastic news.

9. SQA update from Mr Munro

As we approach the SQA exam diet which starts on 3rd May 2016, the current state of play regarding SQA is as follows:

- All national 5 external coursework is currently with SQA and all higher external coursework will be with SQA by the 29th April deadline
- All internal paperwork and submission of estimate grades are on track for completion within the appropriate timeframes
- All pupil personal exam timetables have been issued along with pupil guidance and a parent booklet – this also includes details on the post results services which have taken the place of the old 'appeal'
- All pupils have been informed of the 'mySQA' facility for early receipt of results
- All pupils have been spoken to via assemblies by the chief invigilator, Mr Beattie and all pupils have been made aware of the procedures should they become ill before or during the exam

In relation to study leave, pupils are entitled to the traditional study leave if they have one or more national 5/higher examination. If a pupil does not have any exams, they should be in school for the 'enrichment programme' and Mr Gilbert is working with the pupils this applies to.

10. Tackling Poverty Commission (TPC)

You may have seen from the local media that Renfrewshire Council has had a fairly high profile 'tackling poverty commission' and has set funds aside for education, specifically to focus on literacy and employability. In the secondary sector the employability element of TPC is moving forward with a recent announcement that

schools were receiving additional funding through a range of targeted 'joint employability opportunities'.

Each high school has been given a catalogue of initiatives for selected pupils in S1-6 (typically living in 'SIMD' 1 and 2 postcode areas) designed to support aspiration and guide youngsters into a relevant and sustainable positive destination. The initiatives cover the year groups and a range of areas such as parental engagement, university tasters, work experience, vocational training at college, enhanced work experience, business mentors coming into school from the Chamber of Commerce and 'Step up' to university. We are very excited about this and each school has been asked to identify a member of staff to take on a coordinating role for this programme.