

Parent Council Meeting 11th September 2017

Head Teacher Report

1. Staffing

Each year we start the term with a number of new staff through NQTs, temporary staff and new permanent appointments:

NQTs:

Sarah Semple	Geography
Taylor McSkimming	Modern Studies
Jodie McGarry	Psychology
Corey Brookes	Computing
Kathryn Walker	PE

Permanent to the authority staff (initially placed in JHS):

Ian Schofield	Technical
Ellen Pelegrom	Music
Stephanie Wilson	Chemistry

Permanent staff:

Collette Gribben	English
Ainsley Brown	Learning and behaviour support (full time)

Temporary staff:

Bernise Shamaza	Maths
Lauren Montgomery	History
Adam Stevenson	PE

Returning staff:

Ally Maitland	PE
Dawn Colford	PT Numeracy (one year temp)

Newly promoted staff:

James Brown	PT Pastoral Support (temp)
Katy Robertson (formally Mitchell)	PT Learning and Teaching (temp)

Mick Fulton PT Employability (temp)

Gordon Menzies DHT

We are also in the process of recruiting across a range of areas, due to unsuccessful recruitments prior to summer and forthcoming maternity leaves. Therefore we will soon be looking for classroom assistant staff, English and PE maternity cover and unfortunately we are still carrying a vacancy in Modern Languages.

It is also worth noting that even at this early stage of the year we have a number of staff off sick and we are working hard to maintain a smooth learning and teaching experience despite the ongoing issues in obtaining supply cover.

2. School life

The start of the school session 2017/18 went smoothly. It is always amazing to see over 1000 individuals so quickly slot back into familiar routines despite having been on holiday for 6/7 weeks!

Staff began with a two-day in-service programme heavily influenced by our two priority areas of 'learning and teaching' and 'health and wellbeing'. As usual, there was a presentation on SQA results and staff will take forward subject analysis within their own areas. The theme of the second day was around positive relationships and inclusion, with a stimulating session delivered by staff from Renfrewshire Council's Flexible Learning team. We also invited along Colin McKercher from Columba 1400 to speak to the staff about this exciting new initiative on values based learning that we will be taking forward with S3 this session (this will be discussed at the parent council meeting).

The pupils returned to school on Tuesday 15th August looking splendid in their new school uniforms. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all parents and carers for their support of our uniform policy, which was in the Summer Newsletter and my letter to parents in the August data pack (pupils were also informed about uniform expectations at assemblies both before and after the summer break!). We are doing spot checks to remind pupils to keep up these high standards.

The start of the pupil session began with assemblies for all year groups setting out my expectations (attendance, timekeeping, effort, conduct, uniform, effort etc), information on school performance in the SQA exams and most importantly, outlined our new DHT/ house structure. I was very impressed with the attitude and behaviour of the pupils and we are looking forward to a productive year with our wonderful young people.

In the three weeks that we have been back, we have had a very successful programme of S6 befriending of the new S1, Tempest photographs for all pupils in S1 and S3, over 20 applicants for our S6 pupil leadership team and positive press coverage (see below). A range of staff have volunteered to take on responsibilities, clubs and trips that all enrich school life.

3. Pupil Events

You will see from our parental calendar (included in the data pack) that we have a number of scheduled events throughout the session. These can and will be added to as we organise extra things throughout the year. Trips/events on the go so far this session include Ardentenny, London, the Music dept tour of Belgium, a number of Theatre trips (and maybe even a panto!) and a school show. I have also mentioned to each year group that if they wish to organise an event then every possible support will be given to them.

On September 1st we had our first 'Fresher's Fair' to showcase the clubs and activities going on and to offer pupils an opportunity to sign up things on offer in school.

The 4th of September saw Mr Fulton in his new PT Employability role take 110 seniors to the Scottish Apprenticeship event in Glasgow. We encourage our seniors to make sure they have all the available information so they can make an informed choice about the next stage in their lives. Alongside college and uni open days, modern apprenticeship events are useful to find out more on what can be a great opportunity for young people to progress quickly in their chosen career and earn as they do so. You will see us re-tweet lots of apprenticeship opportunities on our twitter feed as we strongly encourage parents and pupils to actively consider what is often a misunderstood pathway for young people.

In week two we welcomed Alistair from the Youth Philanthropy Initiative to speak to our S3 who will be engaging in this valuable project this session. I will mention this in more detail at the PC meeting.

At time of writing, we have been unable to progress interviews for S5 heads of house and the S6 leadership team due to unexpected staff absence, however there are plans in place to address this as soon as possible.

I understand that the new S6 is keen to organise their end of session prom event, and this is something that we shall discuss at the full parent council meeting.

4. School Improvement Agenda

Our school improvement plan this session has been heavily influenced by our Education Scotland visit in November 2016. We have two overarching priority areas as mentioned earlier and these have shaped whole school priorities - and filters through to every subject department too. Our two priorities are supported this session by our staff 'working time agreement' which has allowed us to set up health and wellbeing collegiate working groups and 'teacher learning communities' so staff can meet in small groups to review current research and share good practice in areas such as numeracy, pupil feedback and active learning strategies.

Each year we take a 'closer look' at departments across the school, identifying areas of good practice and development areas for them to address. Many departments have been through this process over the last few years (Science, Pupil Support, English, Maths, Social Subjects) and this session it is the turn of ICT in September and Technical in November.

We have a new link Education Manager at Renfrewshire Council. Her name is Maureen Sneddon and she is a former DHT at St Ninian's East Renfrewshire, and latterly part of the Health and Wellbeing team at Education Scotland. We are delighted to welcome her to the JHS extended family and look forward to working with her over the forthcoming session and beyond.

Finally, I am pleased to let parents know that I have been accepted to join Education Scotland (HMle) as an 'Associate Assessor'. I have been on two training days and will, hopefully, be part of inspection teams going into secondary schools over Scotland in the next few months. The commitment is approximately two inspections per session and will involve me being out of school for a week each time. I realise that time out of school is not ideal, however I hope you agree that we have a strong DHT team who will oversee the school in my absence. Moreover, I will ensure that the experiences I will engage in as an inspector benefit the pupils of Johnstone High School!

5. Press

In August we were delighted to feature in a positive article in the Paisley Gazette about the strong performance of our S4 national 5 pupils and our S5 higher pupils. This year we moved from 4 pupils getting straight As in S5 to an impressive (and possibly JHS record breaking!) 10. We are proud of ALL of our pupils who achieved their potential in the SQA exam diet, and I was keen to emphasise this point to the Gazette journalist. We will cover SQA performance at the PC meeting, however we have performed strongly across a number of measures and particularly at N4 levels which had been significantly underperforming.

6. Updates on building improvement

As you know, part of my mission for JHS has been to make the building as warm, welcoming and attractive a place to learn as possible. In recent months, the following has been progressed:

- New tables and chairs for non-practical subjects (i.e. Maths, English, Soc Subjects etc). This was a significant capital spend and the difference made to classrooms has been impressive.
- Vision/values/aims boards have been attached to every classroom door in the school to put forward a consistent, 'corporate' message in our new branding style.
- The old guidance rooms have been decorated/repurposed into a formal meeting room, and informal meeting room, a space for visiting specialists e.g. Ed Psych to work in, and a S6 study zone.
- The former meeting room in the management suite has been repurposed and Home Link have moved in, making the management suite an inclusive one stop shop for young people
- The IT technician has moved into a large cupboard (!) vacated by Home Ec and his former room has been re-purposed into a staff development base to support our drive to upskill staff by giving them a well-resourced learning/training space.

Finally, in the next few weeks RE are moving into a room vacated by Home Link and their old base will become the new nurture room for our most vulnerable S1/2 pupils. We are also planning in making one of the RE rooms a second PSE room to reflect increased teaching time in this area.