

Parent Council Meeting 13th November 2017

Head Teacher Report

1. Staffing

Since the last HT report we have recruited two classroom assistants and a full time permanent English teacher. We hope to have all three of them in post prior to Christmas. Miss Brown was also successfully appointed as our new PT Nurture (temp) which is through our pupil equity fund (PEF) monies. A nurture keyworker will complement this role (again, hopefully before Christmas) as we were unable to recruit a primary teacher to lead the nurture base.

However the staffing situation at time of writing is still a concern and Renfrewshire Council are fully aware of this school, local and national recruitment issue. We have a number of long-term teacher absences and a smaller number of temporary/permanent vacancy posts due to staff moving on or maternity leaves.

We are currently experiencing absence / vacancies in the following areas: PE; RE; Maths; English; Modern Languages and Technical. I can assure parents that both the school and the Council are doing all we can to rectify this. I am interviewing for a Modern Languages permanent post on the 20th of November, and for two PE 'permanent to the authority' posts (which will be based here initially) on the 14th of November.

In the meantime, when we experience staff absence and cannot source a supply teacher, we put an in-house 'please take' cover teacher into the department that period and the subject specialists rotate the classes between themselves and the please take teacher. This ensures that no one class is left without a specialist teacher for a sustained period of time. When we have exhausted all in house general cover we will put classes into the assembly hall to be supervised by the SMT. This is absolutely a last resort for us.

2. School Life

Since the last HT report, I am pleased to inform you that we now have a full set of pupil leaders within the school. Irwin Gray and Lily Fowler are our head boy and girl, David Lowat and Jenna Fraser are their deputies, and we also have S5 heads of house and S4 ambassadors. In terms of their remit, the S6/5 leaders are involved in all pupil events (house events, social events and charitable fundraising), supervision and front of house duties and the Pupil Council. S4 ambassadors deputise for them during the exam period and have been tasked with organising an event for their year group, alongside a Head Teacher Challenge. In a new development this session, the S6 pupil leaders have been interviewing pupils in S1-3 to take on the role of junior captains. I will update you on this at the next PC meeting.

Maths week took place in JHS – and around the country – in late September and we embraced this whole-heartedly in Johnstone High School. All pupils in S1-3 took part

as did every member of staff, there was a primary 7 morning event and also an evening event for parents to promote and demystify high school Maths. Pupils took part in a range of activities and the Maths department even became numeracy Ninjas (complete with headbands) for the week. It was a great effort by all involved and particular thanks to Mrs Condy, Mrs Colford and the Maths department.

Staff from Columba 1400 have been into school to meet the staff working group who will be progressing this initiative with S3. The timeframe is January to March, and the programme will be launched to the entire S3 through an assembly on Friday 5th January. Thereafter we will support pupils through an application process and there will be a workshop at the end of January for the 30 candidates who get through the long-leet process. We will then go to interview to select our final 15 pupils who will accompany the five staff members to the six day residential on Skye in March. After the programme, the expectation is that the 15 pupils will become values ambassadors in the school and will take forward school improvement ideas utilising their newly found confidence and leadership skills. The programme is free to pupils and we are very keen to get a rich mix of girls and boys who will benefit from the experience, but who will also give back to their school. More information will come out to S3 parents after the holiday.

S3 are also working on their 'youth philanthropy initiative' (YPI) research projects in PSE classes. This has been very well received by the pupils and I am looking forward to the grand final in March – coinciding with Charities week – when we judge the finalists. I am delighted that our pupils will be able to make such a difference to a deserving local charity. Not only will £3000 have a significant impact, but the process of researching local social issues will engage our students with their local community in a profound way.

On a similar note, we were delighted to kick off our first of four non-uniform days this session just prior to the October week with an appeal for the Renfrewshire foodbank, which raised 1440 food items. Our next non-uniform is just before the Christmas break and donations will go towards our house charities fund.

On 10th November the Dougie Adam from our Chaplaincy team, alongside the History department and senior pupil leaders took our Remembrance Service for pupils in S2 and S6. A very poignant and moving service that looked at the huge sacrifices made over both world wars and the continuing importance of the Poppy Scotland appeal to support ex-veterans.

It has been a very successful few months for individual pupil achievements. To give a flavour of pupil achievement, please note the following (not exhaustive!) list:

- Rebecca Adams S4 – won the Renfrewshire Youth Voice Young Volunteer of the Year Award in November with over 500 hours of volunteering
- Declan Shaw S5 – Won the Scottish Novice Boxing Championships in October
- Leon Drynan S3 – youngest person to win the British indoor Snowboard title in October

- Eilidh Alexander S6 – featured in Friday's edition of Vogue (the first edition under their new editor-in-chief) and has been taken on by an international modelling agency
- Continuing sporting success at the recent Renfrewshire games for individuals and teams in S1-3

Please follow us on Twitter to keep up to date with pupil achievement.

3. Pupil Events

In terms of events that have taken place this term, the most notable has been around Halloween. We had a senior Halloween disco on Thursday 26th October. I am disappointed to inform parents that despite our usual guidance and staff supervision levels a significant number of the year group had been drinking prior to the event. Parental contact was made and the most effected children were sent home. There were incidents that took place during the evening that were handled by myself and the staff. However, I made the decision to speak to both the S5 and S6 the next day to convey my disappointment to those who had been at the root cause, and to update those who hadn't been involved, or indeed, hadn't been in attendance. Following the events of the evening I have made the difficult decision to cancel the seniors' Christmas dance. I will go into further detail about this at the PC meeting. On a lighter note, the S1 Halloween disco took place during school time on Friday 27th October. This was run by a group of S6 students and was a resounding success

In September, Mr Fenwick took pupils in S2 to Ardentinnny for a week of teambuilding and outward bound activities. Another great trip, and as usual, within a week of returning Mr Fenwick already has the booking in place for the following year!

After considerable reflection and contact with officers at the Council, Mrs Irving and I decided to ask parents who had signed their child up for the London 2018 Theatre trip if they wished to continue or pull out (no monies had been paid to the travel company). In the light of ongoing terror concerns, a number of parents made the decision to pull out and therefore the trip has been cancelled due to lack of viable numbers. There are other trips going on in the school, such as the Belgium Music Tour and Mrs Dornan's Lanzarote sports retreat, and these should continue to go-ahead as planned.

13-17th November is both anti-bullying and Children in Need week. We are very much concentrating our efforts on anti-bullying week (but there will be some CIN fundraising) and Ms Wilson in Pastoral has been working with S5/6 pupil leaders to put on a range of activities throughout the week. The focus will be on awareness raising and culture changing. Staff have also been taken through anti-bullying awareness raising to explore how and when they are reacting to pupil peer issues in their classrooms.

There are a range of Christmas activities planned for the month of December. We are not having the traditional Christmas concert as the school show will be taking place on the 12, 13 and 14th of December. There will be a non-uniform day, a

Christmas jumper day, religious observance through the Chaplaincy team's Christmas service and the second year of the massively successful inter-House games, led by Mrs Wilson and the S5 House Captains (think It's a Knockout merged with I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here...). Also, my thanks to the Parent Council for agreeing to lead on a Christmas fayre on 29th November – more to come on this at the PC meeting.

4. Parent events

Since the last PC meeting we have held three significant parent events:

- BGE curriculum evening in October was led by Mr Menzies to further explore with interested parents our plans for the S1-3 curriculum offer. Much of the discussion focussed on the 'Renfrewshire model' for S1-3 that is replicated across the 11 high schools, balanced with the advice and guidance given to us by Education Scotland. My thanks to all who attended and were largely supportive of our plans moving forward.
- S4 parents evening – despite poor weather and football on TV another productive evening with a good turnout and overwhelmingly positive feedback on the evaluation cards. As a result of a PC suggestion, Mrs O'Malley set up a table to support parents with Show My Homework and also the school app. She also had a set of 'roving' pupil volunteers, complete with ipads who mingled with parents to help promote both of these useful communication platforms.
- In early November, Mr Fulton led on a 'parents in partnership' event using an approach that was a bit of a departure for us. S1 pupils and their parents were invited in at 6pm to sample the pupil school meals service, and then to hear about Show My Homework from Mrs O'Malley and child safety online from authority trainer, Jane Scott (at this point the pupils were watching a movie and eating leftover Halloween candy!). Again, very positive feedback and we hope to repeat this in February with primary 7 pupils and parents.

5. School Improvement Agenda

Each year we take a 'closer look' at one or two subject departments in order to identify good practice (so we can share it) and to address any development areas to help the department improve moving forward. In September the SMT visited the Computing and Business Education department. We now use a very similar model to the inspectors and write up findings under the key 'quality indicators' that all schools are judged on. We have worked closely with the staff team in Computing and have identified strength in partnership working and their senior phase curriculum. In terms

of departmental improvement, the team are keen to further progress areas including their BGE curriculum and embedding pupil voice.

Since the last PC meeting I have met with curricular PTs around their SQA results using the Insight tool and other local authority data. PTs have analysed performance of year groups, classes and individuals in their subjects and together we have discussed what lessons can be learned from exam diet 16/17 to improve performance in 17/18. We have also welcomed Assistant Director of Education, Steven Quinn into the school on 26th October as part of his programme of visits to all Renfrewshire secondary schools. Steven has met with every HT and SMT in Renfrewshire to discuss whole school SQA performance. Steven also met with focus groups of pupils, along with a focus group of principal teachers. Steven was happy with our approach and the work we are doing around raising expectations, our ambitious presentation policy, post prelim analysis and support to pupils, and how we go about counselling pupils at options time.

In my last HT report, I mentioned that Maureen Sneddon at HQ is our new Education Manager and will be part of our extended school team. Maureen joined Steven on his SQA visit, and has also been in to school to meet the Principal teachers and join an after school workshop. She has also agreed to support us with our continuing engagement with Education Scotland. Maureen will be coming into school on Monday 13th November and Monday 4th December to focus on our two whole school priority areas of health and wellbeing and learning and teaching. She will carry out learning walks in classrooms, meet members of the SMT, PTs and focus groups of pupils. This will give us external feedback on our rate of progress and will help to identify areas of strength or weakness.

6. Press

The Paisley Gazette has been in touch to forge a relationship with the school to support coverage of events and achievements. Welcoming of this, I met with one of their journalists, Steph, alongside Jennifer from Renfrewshire Council Communications team. I offered to periodically supply Steph with fleshed out articles and photographs for the paper. Colette Gribbon (who joined the English department in August and has taken on the Gryffe Advertiser liaison role) said that she is happy to fulfil this brief.

7. Updates on building improvement

Now that Miss Brown has been appointed as PT Nurture, we are hoping to transform the dedicated space in the top corridor into a nurture base in time for a January 18 pupil launch. Miss Brown already has plans on transforming this space into a homely

environment for our most vulnerable pupils and I hope to be able to show the nurture base to the PC members at the February meeting.

Mr Brown, PT Pupil Support, has plans to convert the rarely used 'Youth Base' beside the staffroom to a safe space for S1/2 pupils who require befriending or have issues with peer relationships / bullying. The S6 leadership team are keen to progress this and will supervise this facility along with S6 volunteers from the mentors in violence prevention programme.



REPORT FOR PARENT COUNCIL

Maths Digital Library

Log into Glow

Click on School Site

Open folder called Maths Digital Library

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|------------------|---|
| Course Summaries | (self explanatory) |
| BGE Resources | Homework Booklets and Answers (answers requested by Parent Council) |
| SP Resources | One folder for every course including notes, past papers, check lists ... |
| Other Resources | Glossary Useful websites (including one tested by a member of Parent Council – thank you) |
| Workout | Interactive resource especially good for S1- S3 |

Courses

New courses are being developed. BGE is in two streams:

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|----|-----------|-----|-----------|
| S1 | Level 2 | and | Level 3 |
| S2 | Level 3 | and | Level 3/4 |
| S3 | Level 3/4 | and | Level 4 |

SP offer is:

N3 Applications (previously Lifeskills)

N4-N5 Mathematics; Higher and Advanced Higher

N4 and N5 both happen in S4 and S5 but the courses run together.

There will be one prelim for all N5 pupils .

Assessment

Assessment dates are set for the department, as are feedback dates.

During feedback, pupils are asked to complete an evaluation sheet

giving specific details on topics and it asks pupils to be reflective of their own learning. The focus is assessment is for learning, and information is

power! The 'big one' is May of S4, until then we are just trying to fix the gaps and celebrate pupils' knowledge and skills.

We are aiming to be more consistent about revision e.g. Mr Edgar issued the revision materials for all of S1 via Show My Homework. The Maths Department loves Show My Homework!

Staffing

No class is without a Maths teacher long term. We rotate.