

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting

Johnstone High School

29th February 2016

Attendees

Parents: Diane Spence (DS) Chair, Paul Cameron (PC) Secretary, Jennifer Ballantyne, Lorna Hendriks, Anne Campbell, Jaqueline Tavendale, Aileen Brown, Kirstin Lyons, Shirley Ormond, Lesley Reid, Gillian Williams, Neil Fowler, Elaine Gray, Beatrice O'Neil, Andy Steel

Staff:

Lynne Hollywood (LH) Acting Head Teacher, Kit Gilbert (KG) Depute Head Teacher, Ryan Miller (RM) Depute Head Teacher, Mick Fulton (MF)

Others:

ClIc John Hood

Apologies:

ClIr Iain McMillan, Arlene Motherwell, Martine Wylie, Elaine McDonald

DS welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced new member Beatrice O'Neil. The minutes of the meeting Monday 7th December 2015 were approved and will be uploaded to the school website.

Previous actions.

Parent Council Constitution has been sent to new members.

School had intended to mail merge the Glow and new pupil bulletin but this needs further work. Mrs Hollywood will contact Mr McGiven to progress. A pupil bulletin has been issued.

McGills buses: Diane had arranged to meet Mr Napier head of McGills but it was postponed at the last minute, however will arrange another meeting soon.

Two new parents have now joined the Parent Council. Sixteen parents currently on the waiting list. DS suggested that all parents on the waiting list are personally invited to the AGM in May. It was highlighted that any parent can come to the AGM but this would acknowledge their waiting list status and hopefully sustain their interest.

Head Teachers Reports Jan & Feb

Mrs Hollywood highlighted that we have 2 HT Reports (January & February) due to the January meeting being cancelled.

Mrs Hollywood apologised that the January meeting had been cancelled, as she had flu, along with many other staff members during that week.

LH highlighted that many of the items in the Jan report had been superseded by events. School life in Jan was largely about options and prelims.

There have been two school meetings, firstly from Sandra Black, Chief Executive of Renfrewshire Council and another from Local Authority members looking at school progress. Both visits went very well.

A HMle representative is coming into the school for an informal meeting to see if there is any support they can give and to meet with the Senior Management Team.

Press: The Paisley Express ran an article regarding school heating issues. LH highlighted that no one from the Press had been in contact with the school and social media had been the source of the story. Apparently the fire alarm went off during the holidays and that cut out the heating. However there had been no complaints from parents, staff or pupils.

Front of school redevelopment: Progressing well, gardening and repainting. LH took the parent members to view the work. Further work in the reception area still to be done. School toilets will be refurbished during the summer holidays, out with term time.

Staffing

The school have appointed a new Faculty Head of Science.

Ms Wilson is currently Acting PT of Guidance.

The school is still struggling with supply in some departments and the school is prioritising certificated classes.

Pupil events: Several of JHS dance pupils went to Corseford for a dance event. Senior pupils had a special assembly where they were registering to vote.

The school ran a successful options evening and a number of employability events including the STEAM event and careers fayre.

Parent events: S2 & S3 parent evenings are scheduled on 23rd Feb and 10th Mar.

School press and publicity:

MissCarswell from the English Department is handling press from JHS to the Gryffe Advertiser. Ms Carswell has been contacting staff looking for photos and stories. She has a group of interested pupils supporting her. LH has contacted the Renfrewshire Council Marketing Dept to ask what support they can give. The newsletter is now also on the website along with twitter and Facebook.

Parent Council members are requested to share good stories about JHS on their own social media and local newsletters.

Johnstone High's 50th Anniversary celebrations will take place during the senior award ceremony on the 21st April. Still looking for 15 JHS alumni to complete the guest list. Invites will also be going out to Parent Council members.

Subject options

Pupils had a trial run of picking options however many parents were unaware of this and thought it was the real options selection. Parent Council asked if school could notify parents when this is happening in the future.

Action LH will ask Mrs Sturgeon to inform parents of trial run of subject options.

A PC member raised concerns that the S3 parents evening is the day before the options choices have to be agreed. Mr Miller replied that it is an issue fitting in all the parents evenings, but this will be addressed in next year's school calendar.

LH highlighted that parents nights, events etc are on the school website. Parent Council members to encourage parents to use the calendar information on the website. Mrs Dick, Education Support Manager along with a working group will take over responsibility of the school calendar.

LH plans to issue a laminated school calendar to all pupils/parents for the next school year.

Parent Council member asked about the "Closer Look" reviews. KG stated that the school has completed 7 so far. The aim of these reports is to give the departments information to help them improve and also identify strengths and share good practice. Reviews are a rolling program.

Insight Presentation – Kit Gilbert

Mr Gilbert (KG) gave a brief over view of Insight, the Scottish Government online benchmarking tool for schools. KG had given an introduction to Insight to the Parent Council in Oct 2015.

Insight reveals that JHS is a school of comparisons. Using the Scottish Government's SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) JHS pupils come from homes across a very broad range of SIMD, from deprived to relatively affluent. There is a very noticeable split between pupils who are in higher SIMDs and those who are from lower SIMDs. There appears to be a relationship between pupils' attainment and the level of deprivation.

Insight reveals that there are still challenges for JHS. In general JHS is still performing slightly below its virtual comparator. The major challenge for JHS is raising attainment for all of its broad range of pupils. In the school improvement plan is targeting support to pupils who need it most.

Raising Attainment Presentation – Ryan Miller

Mr Miller outlined how the school will use Insight data to drive improvement in order to raise pupil attainment. He highlighted this will take time to achieve but the ambition to inspire and improve covers the whole school, pupils and staff. It is a multi-track approach that acknowledges JHS serves a catchment area with a very wide SIMD and some pupils do need focused extra support.

JHS are at the start of this improvement strategy. JHS have a very hard working staff who want to do the best by the pupils and the following initiatives build on that enthusiasm:

- The school has launched a new mentoring scheme to target pupils who would most benefit the support. 40 pupils have been offered 1 to 1 mentoring/coaching from (volunteer) teachers (the ratio is 2 pupils to 1 mentor). The original optional mentoring scheme is also continuing.
- There will also be an Easter School during the holidays for extra studying/support.
- Supported study is running all year round on a goodwill basis. Funding has been allocated for additional supported study prior to exams. The challenge is to support

those that most need it as often it is children who are already doing well that attend. Support needs to reach the pupils who would most benefit from it. New mentoring scheme should help tackle this.

- The school is actively seeking extra funding to feed into raising attainment.
- The school's Senior Management Team and Principal Teachers are carrying out a planned programme of classroom observations to help improve teaching and learning. As part of the working time agreement teachers are encouraged to be innovative, develop their teaching practice and share best practice throughout the school.

RM leads the school's raising attainment collegiate group. RM is working with Gavin Russell, who is part of Scottish Government's RAFA (Raising Attainment for All) Project. There are now 6 teachers running RAFA type improvement projects within the school. These include projects in numeracy and literacy, health and well being & French. These projects range from supporting pupils with poor attainment to stretching the more able.

A parent commented on the benefits of the mentoring programme, in particular helping pupils learn how to study.

A parent asked the question What happens if a teacher's class doesn't do as well as expected? LH explained how the teacher and class are supported and methods applied for improvement.

Vision Values and Aims

LH: School is planning to refresh its "branding" and "vision values and aims". Raising aspiration will be a key part of that. School will involve pupils, staff and parents in this process.

Action DS will email parent members requesting volunteers wishing to be involved and will forward names to LH. A meeting will be scheduled in term 4.

Homework

Parent member asked: Is there a school wide policy regarding homework?

RM explained there is a current school homework policy however it needs refreshing and therefore it is not in the current handbook. Homework varies throughout departments and is issued in different ways.

Discussion around the need to update and formalise the school's homework policy occurred. LH stated that homework and parental involvement is a key part of the improvement planning process.

Comments raised

- Parent requested if each department could indicate what and how often homework is expected.
- LH stated that pupils who continuously fail to complete homework will be reported to SMT/Guidance and parents.
- Parent commented that homework can be an added stress in some homes especially if pupil not supported at home.
- KG commented for homework to work, there has to be a partnership with parents. Most beneficial if this partnership starts in primary school.

Pupil Social Events

There are many events for S5 and S6 but very few for S1-4. School would like to be able to offer more social events next year, though need to be mindful of costs to pupils and families. Would plan to involve pupil council with this.

LH hopes that each year group would have one scheduled event each year to look forward to.

DS suggested that parent members could offer to help with these events. Parent members agreed more social events would be welcomed and a willingness to help was offered.

LH: Mr Munro has produced a study guide for parents and guardians. LH issued draft copy at the meeting and asked if parents could send any comments to herself or Mr Munro.

Pre Agenda for next meeting.

LH suggested Joanne Sturgeon presents on timetabling and pupil support.

Next meeting: MONDAY 25TH APRIL