



## Parent Council Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019

### Head Teacher Report

#### Staffing

As we near the end of the school session, we are already quite far down the line of organising staffing for August.

In February, the first date for appointing this year's NQTs, I interviewed for five positions and made permanent appointments for an August start in:

- Business Studies
- PE
- RE
- Chemistry
- Music

I have also made a permanent appointment in English, as Mr Doherty has resigned. We will find out about next year's probationers at the end of this month, and I will give you more information in the fullness of time.

Mr Brown's 23-month secondment to the pastoral team will finish at the end of May and he will return to his teaching role within the Technical team. Miss Wilkie will temporarily cover Skye House over June, and it is my hope to appoint a new PT Pastoral position with a remit covering Skye House and Inclusion, starting August 2019. Ms Butler-Robson, PT Pastoral Iona House, is coming back to work from maternity leave 4 days per week, so a 0.2FTE opportunity will go out to staff.

Ms Irving, Dr Costello, Mrs Moffat, Mrs Smith and Mrs Barry are all permanently reducing their days next session, and Mr Mulaney in Physics is retiring at the end of the term – we wish him well and thank him for his many years of service to the children of Johnstone.

In terms of the DHTs, Mr Palombo and Ms Cole will carry on as acting DHTs into next session. Similarly, Mr McKenzie in Science and Mr Clark and Ms Kilgour (Eng/ML) will continue in their acting roles.

In other news, Mr Combe (PE) has moved to Park Mains High School. Miss Wilson (Chemistry) returned from maternity leave in March. Miss Keenan has been appointed to the role of PT Music (temp – maternity leave) at Castlehead High School and takes up post in June. Finally, Mr Miller has been appointed as the new head teacher of Stewarton Academy. We are delighted for him and wish him well in his own school.



## School Life – Pupils

Johnstone High School is a vibrant and busy place and you can get a feel for our activities and events through our twitter feed. Since February we have had:

- a non-uniform day for Comic Relief
- fundraising for World Challenge community projects
- our hearty lives senior ambassadors have arranged for after school Clubbersize sessions for staff and pupils
- the Zoo Man came into The Thrive Hive with a range of exotic and quite frankly, terrifying animals for the young people to handle and interact with
- we had behaviour reward events at Easter for pupils who have exemplary behaviour – the obligatory Easter Egg Hunt and chocolate prizes for the winners
- we have introduced the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) project with S2 who are working on this through their English classes. This involves pupils working in groups to research and then select a local social issue/charity to champion. Each group puts together a presentation to their class to say why their charity is the most deserving, and the winning group in each class goes forward to the grand final that will take place in June. Each winning group will present to their year group and a panel of judges, and the winning group will receive £3000 from YPI to donate to their local social issue/charity. Last session Renfrewshire Women's Aid was our winner.

This term has seen a range of sporting, music and art successes. Leon in S5 competed at the Youth Olympics in Sarajevo, we had a terrific showing at the Renfrewshire Schools dance competition (another trophy for the cabinet), ongoing success for the senior volleyball team, a great set of results at the recent Renfrewshire cross country, and of course, great dedication from all our football teams, both male and female. Music successes this term have included the national five showcase evening, ongoing success and press coverage of the Renfrewshire Schools Pipe Band, many of whom are JHS pupils; JHS pupils stole the show at the recent Renfrewshire Spring Concert in Paisley Abbey, and finally, our own spring concert which allowed pupils of all ages and stages to showcase their talents in front of friends and family. We are very much looking forward to 'We Will Rock You' in June. Finally, the Art department had a many pieces of pupil work at the Renfrewshire 'Inspired Exhibition'. We are proud of each one of our talented young people.

Of course, the weeks up to Easter were very much focused on preparing for the SQA diet that began at the end of April and this year is scheduled for 6 weeks. Supported study has been delivered by a number of staff throughout the year; this usually works on a drop-in basis and is entirely at their goodwill. This year we supplemented this with 'raising attainment booster classes' (RABS) which pupils signed up for week by



week and were taught sessions. Although staff were paid for these, again it was on a volunteer basis and depended on viable pupil numbers. Easter school took place during week one of spring break, and masterclasses have been scheduled as a 'final push' the day before each SQA exam. We have received positive feedback from pupils, parents and staff on this programme of attainment support and hope to make this a feature year-on-year. Exams are currently underway, and other than a bird interrupting higher Maths, they have went smoothly and without incident.

For youngsters who are not studying national five (and therefore have no entitlement to study leave), an 'enrichment programme' has been put in place. This has involved unit catch-ups in school, life skills and employability work in school, alongside work experience and employer visits and some cultural elements are planned such as trips to museums etc. Enrichment has been well attended so far; the pupils are enjoying their experience and are telling us it is worthwhile.

In terms of the life of the school, there have been a number of trips and residential that have taken place, or indeed, that are planned for the final weeks of term. For example, Mrs Carlin has taken a number of lucky students to London for the day for a special invitational event to work alongside Alexander McQueen designers. We are now a fully trained, self-sufficient Centre for Duke of Edinburgh (our staff can now independently run and lead expeditions at Bronze level) and I am aware that there are plans to get all pupils through their expeditions by the end of term. Miss Mullaney is currently away with 4 other staff and 15 S3 pupils to Skye for the Columba 1400 pupil leadership week. Our hope is that these pupils – like the previous cohort – will return to school as values ambassadors who will shape the direction of travel in the school and act as role models to other learners. Mr McGivern and his intrepid team of staff and seniors are counting down the days to the next World Challenge expedition in India. Mr McGivern has already booked in assemblies for August to launch World Challenge 2021! Watch this space!

Week beginning 20 May we are planning to hold a 'health and wellbeing week' in school for pupils and staff. Various things will be happening within PE, HE and across the wider school community:

- In PE, pupils will be experiencing a selection of alternative activities that they do not normally get. To ensure all pupils get the same opportunities, some of them will be getting off timetable in certain subjects to come to PE instead. On Thursday 23 May at lunchtime, we are having a staff v pupil's softball game.
- In HEc, all pupils will be making a 'fakeaway' that will take the form of a healthy pot noodle.
- Pupils will be focusing on kindness, creating positive postcards and giving and receiving positive mental health messages via flyers made in Art. There will also be a self-help mental health corner in classrooms.



- In PSE lessons, pupils will look at the Health and Wellbeing indicators and compare their feelings before and after health week. Health week coincides with national Nurture week. There will be a focus on feeling 'Safe' within Nurture week that fits in well with what PSE classes will be doing.
- Staff will be asked to deliver a lesson linked to HWB. This will be linked to the benefits of sleep.
- There will be an exercise bike in the foyer on Thursday 23 May all day. When staff are not teaching they will be encouraged to come down we will aim to cycle as many miles as we can in one school day. We will hold a competition for pupils to guess how far we get!
- The daily staff step challenge will involve staff counting their steps each day for three days with a prize at the end.
- All staff will need to leave the school building by 4.15pm on these three days and asked not to take any work home.

In our drive to be responsible citizens and good neighbours, we have taken part in any Renfrewshire Council planned 'team up to clean up' litter picking campaigns. Before Easter, our S6 leadership team wrote to local counsellors looking for their support in relation to litter in the local area, specifically the provision of bins. I have recently been told that there will now be an extra bin at the back path. The S6 group also wrote to parents to raise the prospect of pupils carrying out litter picking duties in school grounds (tear off opt-outs were included and then collated). I am pleased to report that Dr Crossan in social subjects is now organising for S1 classes to go out, one per week, and litter pick in the school grounds.

As we get towards the end of term, I will letter parents with the arrangements for the final week and the start of the new session in August. We will have learning and teaching right up until Wednesday 26 June as that has been designated as Carnival day and I am delighted that this year we will be joined by some of our feeder primary schools in the afternoon. Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> is activities day, with the usual range of trips out of school, alongside in school events. We are mindful of cost, therefore the carnival is £4 and there are trips to suit every taste and budget. We also, discreetly, support pupils and families for whom cost is an issue. We stop for the summer holidays at 1pm on Friday 28 June.

Lastly, I must give special comment and praise to a fabulous cohort of S6 who finished just prior to the Easter weekend. They have been outstanding throughout the session and finished their few days in school with a litter pick of the local area, dressing up, senior awards, graduation and a brilliant farewell day at Lapwing Lodge. We took two buses to the Braes early morning, and the pupils were able to dip in and out of a range of activities including sumo wrestling, archery, high ropes and canoeing, followed by a burger lunch cooked by staff. A great day was had by all and we have already booked Lapwing for next year!



## **School life – Parents**

Since our last meeting we have had a parents' evening for S1. The feedback indicated that the majority felt the evening was well organised, but there were a few comments about timings and the use of the dining hall (rather than the hall which was set up for exams). I am looking into an online system for parents' evening bookings and will liaise with the council about this.

Parent pay has gone live in the last few weeks. This programme is designed to make schools as cashless as possible and give parents more control and reassurance, as monies no longer need to be physically sent in to pay for lunches or school trips. The pupils have taken to it well, with the vast majority getting to grips with their 4-digit pin number and the need for confidentiality so no one can access their funds. We continue to support parents to sign up, and had a stall at the S1 parents evening.

As you will know, our school phone number changed at the start of the month to bring us in line with the council system. Another wee change that went relatively smoothly!

We are working closely with primary schools, staff, pupils and parents, to prepare for the transition of P7 into S1. Our projected intake stands at approx. 190 and placing requests are holding up well. This is a significant improvement from when I joined the school in August 2015 (150 intake). We will be offering P7 pupils and parents an information evening on 3 June, which will also include a taster session of the school meal offer. The three-day visit then takes place on June 12-14.

Finally, the 'parents in partnership' (PIP) programme has been running all year and supporting parents of pupils in S1. Sessions have been delivered around the various curricular areas in the school, supporting your child's learning, and on topics that are of interest to the parents. P7 parent coffee mornings have also taken place in the primary schools and these have been supported by our two transition teachers. Hopefully these parents will come into our PIP project when their child begins S1 in August.

## **School Improvement Agenda**

At the last PC meeting, I mentioned that we were due to be visited by Maureen Sneddon, our link Education Manager, to validate the report I have written for Education Scotland to bring our continuing engagement to a close. Unfortunately, this session had to be postponed due to illness, and has been rescheduled to take



place on Tuesday 21 May 2019. Maureen and her colleague Julie Colquhoun, Education Manager, will observe a number of lessons and will meet groups of pupils and staff.

As part of our on-going programme of supporting and upskilling colleagues, we held an 'attainment day' for the PTs during the winter term. The focus of this was on how best to support learners, particularly post-prelim, to maximise attainment prior to SQA exams. This was well received and we have another session scheduled for the end of the month to focus on departmental improvement planning and our school / department priorities.

As we are in May, it is the time of year to evaluate this session's school improvement plan and start drawing up our priorities for session 2019/20. As you know, our current priorities are health and wellbeing alongside learning and teaching. I am keen to continue these for a third (and potentially, final) year, and now add in 'attainment' as a third school priority. I am interested in capturing the views of parents around this and will bring this up at the main PC meeting. I welcome your suggestions as to what should sit underneath these priority areas.

## **Updates on building improvement**

There are plans in place to revamp the assembly hall over the summer holiday. Contractors have been out and we are awaiting final firmed-up plans, however new stage curtains have already been selected!

Finally, we are always keen to maximise our accommodation to best meet the needs of the pupils. To that end, we will be looking at a range of areas in the school and are very likely to be making some accommodation moves prior to the new session start in August. We will work hard to ensure minimal impact on the learners.