**Crossmichael Primary School Parent Council (PC)**

**Minutes - Monday 7th November 2022 at 7pm at Crossmichael Primary School**

Minutes taken by Larissa Wheeler

1. **Apologies** – Debs Nelson, Natalie Richards
2. **Attendees** – Ben Wild (Chair), Lucy Wilson (Treasurer), Larissa Wheeler (Secretary), Mary Cruickshanks (Headteacher), Shani McMiken, Sarah Cooper (audio call)
3. **Approval of minutes of last meeting** – Shani proposed the minutes, seconded by Ben They were accepted as an accurate record of the last meeting.
4. **Chairperson’s Report** – A big thank you to the parent council for the Halloween party, which the children thoroughly enjoyed.
5. **Head Teachers Report:**

**Learning Assistant Hours**

Since our last meeting, I am delighted to report that we did receive and additional 27.5hrs of Learning Assistant hours from the Supporting Learners team. This has enabled us to cover our pupils who require the most significant level of support for learning and medical needs. We are targeting most pupils through universal support within the classroom and where capacity allows, we can provide targeted support for some learners in Literacy & Language and in Numeracy and Maths.

**Sponsored Walk**

Our Sponsored walk raised a phenomenal £1787.50! Thank you so much to our families and friends for sponsoring our pupils. We are using the money to fund equipment for outdoor learning and PE.

**Open Night**

Our open night in September was well attended and feedback was positive.

**Halloween Party**

We wish to thank our Parent Council for organising and running the Halloween parties last week. Our children really enjoyed themselves.

**Raising Attainment in Reading/ Writing**

We are focusing on raising attainment in writing. Research shows that there are ten key features that make a good writer:



Reading and writing are interlinked. We are in the process of auditing our reading materials to ensure pupils have experience of reading a variety of genres with varied writing styles and vocabulary.

Over time, we plan to book band out library using PM Benchmarking. This is a universal book banding system that organises books according to reading age regardless of the ‘scheme’ or ‘author’. It is widely used and links in with D&G targeted interventions such as Closing the Literacy Gap. It will enable us to include a variety of fiction and non-fiction such as cartoons, poetry, eBooks, newspapers, novels and shorter texts. For the time being, we are focusing on group texts for those pupils with a reading age of between 8yrs to 12+yrs.

I met with a representative from Collins who shared some ‘Big Cat’ readers with me. We may choose to purchase some sets of these books before Christmas.

One method of raising attainment in reading is through a methodology called ‘Reciprocal Reading’ (also known as ‘Book Detectives’). This is where children are taught key reading skills that can be adapted to help them understand any text. All teachers have been trained in this approach and the expectation is that all pupils will become fluent in using the strategies to improve their understanding. We plan to share this information with parents as soon as possible.

We are encouraging children to become good writers by rehearsing stories orally or through Drama before starting to write them down. E.g. Our older pupils recently completed puppet shows retelling creation stories from other religions. (Some did this using shadow puppets, others used plasticene models made into an animation.) They told the stories orally and this acted as a rehearsal for good writing. Our younger pupils sometimes draw a background and make characters that they can move so that they can tell the story. Again, this can help them to rehearse the story and often enables them to write it more effectively. They then have the option of changing and improving their stories. It really works!

Parents can help their children by reading a variety of stories or by making up stories together. Please encourage your children to draw pictures and talk about them. It is also helpful when parents play alongside their children as they play with toys. Providing a narrative as you play can help your child to become a good storyteller. Again, we hope to share some information with you on how you can support your child at home.

**What’s on this term?**

* Christmas parties organised so that year groups will be together
* Pantomime at the Fullarton is booked on Thursday 15th December (evening)
* School Show will be on Tuesday 20th December (pm and evening performances in Village Hall)

**An update on the cost of ‘First News’ Subscription**

We had asked if the Parent Council would consider paying for our First News subscription. Mrs Glover investigated and the costs are as follows. We will split this between the two schools if you are in agreement.

* 2 newspapers and activity sheet access **£389**
* 4 newspapers and activity sheet access **£505**
* 6 newspapers and activity sheet access **£579**

**ICT Update from the Digital Schools’ Manager – Anne Harkness**

The infrastructure and network have been updated! Basically, all has been upgraded!! We can now bring in any device from home and link to the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) network.

You may be aware that Scottish Government pledged to provide each pupil in Scotland with a device. Unfortunately, this has not yet happened so D&G Council has looked at existing finances and can guarantee that all pupils in P1-3 will receive one device between 3 pupils. P4-7 will receive one device between two pupils. This will happen in the next few weeks.

In the future, Anne will provide training for all staff on a variety of topics. In the meantime, she needs to have someone who is willing to be our 'Digital Leader' across the partnership schools. This person would be a point of contact for Anne. Mrs Glover has agreed to volunteer.

This is very exciting and may mean that we can work towards getting our Digital Schools Award in the future.

1. **Treasurer’s Report** –

Nothing significant to report on the account. Balance remains as previously disclosed at the last meeting, £2,739.88. There will however be a deduction of £101.19 for foods and prizes for the Halloween Party.

1. **Fundraising**  - Ideas for fundraising were discussed. A decision was made to have a ‘Scottish Evening’ rather than a Burns Supper. The proposed date for this is Friday 27th January. There could be poetry performances from the pupils, possible dances, teas/coffees/snacks. The parent council will discuss further ideas and research music, confirm the venue etc. Hopefully the village hall could be used for this to enable more people to attend. It would be ticketed.
2. **Resources** – £400 of parent council money will be spent on outdoor learning equipment. It was agreed to obtain a subscription to First News (6 newspapers/week with associated activities). This would be paid in part by the parent council. There was discussion around the possibility of banding or levelling donated books to increase the variety of genres and choice in the school library.
3. **Parental literacy support –** In light of the situation regarding the reduction of learning assistant’s hours, discussion was had around the possibility of more parental support within classes. There was also the idea of providing some training session for parents to enable them to feel more confident in delivering this type of support.
4. **AOB** – None
5. **Date of next meeting** – Monday 16th November 2023, 7pm.