**Gelston Primary School Parent Council Minutes (Including AGM)**

**Wednesday 8th November 2023**

**Attendees**

Pam Shuttleworth (Chair)

Kay Davies (Treasurer)

Abbie Robertson

Mary Cruickshanks (Head Teacher)

Apologies

Emma Howard (Secretary)

AGM can go ahead as after consulting the constitution the required quorum has been achieved.

**Chair Report**

This year has been another successful one. These are the activities that we were able to organise and help fund through all the hard work and commitment of our volunteers. Without the efforts of everyone involved none of these activities would be possible!

* Halloween Party
* Christmas Pantomime
* Christmas Party
* Christmas Hamper Raffle
* Haggis Drive
* Coronation Picnic and badges
* Edinburgh Zoo trip
* Newspaper subscription
* P1 books
* P7 ties

By the end of the summer term we had also raised sufficient funds to finally build the outdoor classroom thanks to the generous matching donation from the Scott’s of Gelston Castle Estates.

We closed the year by working alongside D&G Council to get the project started.

**Headteacher’s Report for AGM**

**Standards and Quality Report**

In May 2023, we submitted our Standards and Quality Report which measures our progress against our School Improvement Plan.  I have tried to summarise the main points.

Raising Attainment in Numeracy and Maths:

across Castle Douglas High School Cluster, teachers are becoming more confident in using the ‘D&G A Framework for Numeracy’ programme and this is helping to increase attainment in numeracy.  Consistency in our approach to teaching numeracy should help to raise attainment over time.  Our standardised assessment results showed higher levels of attainment that teachers’ professional judgements so there is still work to be done in moderation of assessment evidence across the Cluster schools.

Covid Recovery, Health and Wellbeing and Nurture

We targeted several pupils with a six-week targeted intervention in nurture groups.  Teachers and children reported that this was worthwhile and did have a positive impact on individuals.  We adopt a nurturing approach across our schools.  Next session we hope to start our Rights Respecting School journey as a way of exploring the United Convention of the Rights of the Child and making them explicit in our school communities.

Raising Attainment in Writing

Our writing attainment has been heavily impacted by the school closures and this is the case across the Stewartry schools.  In our schools, we have consistency in our approaches to teaching writing with a real focus on the ten key features that make a good writer as researched by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE).  Our learners are becoming clearer about how well they are progressing within and across curricular levels because we share learning intentions and success criteria with them and they can see an overview of their progress within a level.  Next session, we aim to develop this further by engaging with the new D&G Developing Balanced Literacy Frameworks which are in alignment with our methodology.  This is still a priority area for us.

Report on the Impact of Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap using Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)

In June 2022 our poverty related attainment gap looked like this:

**A table with numbers and percentages

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In June 2023, it looked like this:

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We can see the gaps starting to increase again but not with those children who previously received interventions.  Their progress has continued.  Our Learning Assistants, who are paid to complete targeted interventions in literacy and in numeracy, have been required to work on a 1:1 with pupils who have significant medical needs and social, emotional, behavioural needs.  Teachers have tried to bridge the gap by implementing targeted interventions with groups in the class instead.  At times, Learning Assistants have had some capacity to work 1:1 with pupils for shorter bursts of time.

A few other points:

* Attendance figures are high and almost all learners report that they feel happy and settled in school.
* Our Positive Relationships Policy is embedded in both schools and is working.
* Staff are involved in a variety of leadership roles at Cluster and Local Authority level.  We now need to develop leadership opportunities further amongst pupils.
* We have good links with our communities and aim to develop these to enhance learning experiences for our children.  E.g. Wider Achievement Programme at Gelston and Community Trail in Crossmichael.
* Our parents and families are extremely supportive and keen to volunteer in school.
* The overall quality of learning and teaching is very good in our schools with children being involved in a range of well-planned activities across the four contexts of learning – curriculum, interdisciplinary learning, personal achievements and the ethos and life of the school.
* Tracking and monitoring of attainment evidence over time gives us a clearer picture of our strengths and next steps for learning and teaching.
* Assessment evidence is appropriately varied in our schools based on class work and standardised assessments.  Teachers make professional judgements of a learner’s achievements by triangulating the evidence.  There is more work to be done across Castle Dougals High School Cluster to ensure that our professional judgements are robust.  Sometimes Primary Teachers tend to slightly down grade pupils because they are being especially careful.  We aim to engage in more moderation exercises across the Cluster schools to resolve this.
* Finances are restricted and we are reliant on fundraising and grants to help purchase important resources for our schools.
* Most of our learners are all making steady progress over time, but our attainment data is not yet as high as hoped.  It will take time to recover after the school closures but we are seeing progress.

**School Improvement Plan Priorities for 2023/ 2024**

Here are some of our main priorities:

* To raise attainment in literacy with a focus on the D&G DBL Frameworks
* To develop our inclusive practice by becoming Rights Respecting Schools (explicitly focusing on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)
* To develop a better system for profiling pupil achievements

**School Finances**

We have three accounts:

1. Devolved School Management (DSM) account - given to us from D&G Council
2. School Fund – our bank account containing money raised through fundraising events and charitable donations
3. Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) account – provided by Scottish Government to target pupils to help close the poverty related attainment gap

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Account | 1st April 2023  \*PEF runs August to August |
| DSM | £6,585 |
| School Fund | £3,749 |
| \*PEF | \*£7,350 (in August 2022) |

**Treasurer’s Report**

Balance from previous year was £3464.57

Our Christmas raffle was a huge success with us raising £512.00

We also received £81.01 commission from the Christmas Cards from My Childs Art

We held a Haggis Drive in January which was not meant to be a fund raiser and we still raised £73.00.

Throughout the year we have paid for the Halloween and Christmas Party’s for both classes. Fullarton Tickets for the Christmas Panto along with ice cream.

First news payment to Crossmichael and Coronation badges for all the Children along with School ties for all P7 pupil going to High school and Books for the New primary 1s.

We also paid for the Childrens school trip to Edinburgh zoo this year

**Gelston Primary Parent Council 2022 -2023**

**Income -** £ 4300.18

**Expenditure** - £1176.19

**Total Balance**- £3123.99

(£2500 of the closing balance has been raised to add to the Outdoor Classroom fund)

**Electing of PC Role bearers**

*Chair*- Pam Shuttleworth was happy to remain in this role for another year but noted that by next year would be looking to support someone else in the role in preparation for when the time comes that she no longer has any children attending Gelston School. (AR proposed – KD seconded)

*Treasurer* – Kay Davies was happy to continue in this role (PS proposed – AR seconded)

*Secretary* – Emma resigned from this post – Abbie Robertson was elected to fill this role (PS proposed-KD seconded)

This concluded the AGM section of the meeting.

**Chair updates since last meeting**

Outdoor classroom plans seems to have ground to a halt at the moment. After discussions with Larann Foss (D&G Council School Estates Manager) at the end of the summer term we established that the regulations that govern erecting structures on school grounds has changed considerably since Crossmichael built their outdoor classroom. It was agreed that Larann would ask the Architectural department to draw up plans for our classroom using the Crossmichael outdoor classroom as the blue print for the structure. There was no guarantee on the time scale however as it would have to done as an aside rather than a priority although when we decided to take this option to comply with the new regulations the expectation was that we would hopefully have the classroom built within this academic year or at the very least started on the construction. Larann contacted the PC at the beginning of term one to asking if we still planned on going ahead with the classroom in this way and suggested we could opt for a ‘kit’ classroom instead. This would also satisfy the new regulations as the design responsibility would rest with the manufacturer. After a discussion between the PC & Mary it was decided that we wanted to go ahead with the original plan as we wanted to use local contractors which we already had in place once we had the go ahead from the council. Pam contacted Larann again with our decision but has yet to hear back from him.

Action agreed

* Pam to contact Larann again for a further update
* Mary to contact Larann for a further update

**Engagement Discussions**

The group discussed the ways in which the PC engage with the wider Parent Forum.

*WhatsApp Group* – we used this most regularly to discuss events but although there are members who don’t participate in discussions its mostly used by the role bearers. Consider adding group info & Pam’s number to correspondence

*Facebook Page* – this doesn’t get used as much as it should mainly due to Pam’s lack of knowledge of Facebook in general. The page is set up as a ‘person’ as opposed to a group. Consider using this page to post on ‘whole school’ group that way school can update members without any breach of data protection as PC doesn’t then need access to any of parents’ info.

*School Website* – Minutes are uploaded by Mary.

Actions agreed

* Abbie to create flyer with details of help required for the coming year- include Pam’s number for anyone wishing to join WhatsApp group as well as PC email- flyer to be emailed to PC email address on completion
* Pam to pass on login details to Kay for Facebook account. Kay agreed to take on the management of any interaction on Facebook
* Pam to forward flyer to Mary with a short email summary of what we have achieved in terms of what our fundraising has paid for to be sent out to parents

**Treasurer’s Report**

See AGM section of minutes

**Head Teacher report**

**Staffing Updates**

We welcome Mrs Carolyn Lumsden who is now working as Principal Teacher each Friday at Gelston. Mr Houston’s post is advertised with a closing date of 15th November 2023.

Staffing is settled at Crossmichael at the moment. We have a student teacher in P1/2 called Miss Danielle Hume who started with us on Monday 6th November. She will be with us for four separate blocks this year. We will have a student teacher in P5/6 in January and February. Her name is Miss Shannon McMinn.

**Stakeholder Survey Questionnaire**

Parents/ Guardians have been asked to complete our school improvement questionnaire to help inform us of our strengths and next steps as a school community. This was emailed last term and Mary will pop a link into the November newsletter. Pupils, Staff and Partners have also been asked to complete a questionnaire. We will share the results with you in Term 3.

**Communication**

The Local Authority has not yet come up with an alternative to Dojo or Facebook. The Safer Schools app is being considered but it does not yet have the functionality that we are looking for. We enjoyed being able to share photographs and liked to receive your comments on posts. This app does not enable us to do this yet.

In the interim, we will communicate with parents via email and the school website and blog. Here is the link: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/dg/crossmichael/>

Urgent messages will be sent via text message.

The Crossmichael Parent Council Facebook page will continue to exist.

**D&G Collaborative Review of Additional Support Needs (ASN)**

This term, the Supporting Learners Team intends to complete an internal review of our provision for children with additional support needs. We have not yet had the dates confirmed.

We would welcome your support as the team are likely to want to meet with a group of parents/ guardians who have children with ASN so that you can share your views. This will give you the opportunity to talk about what is working well for your child(ren) and what needs to get better. It will also give you the opportunity to discuss Learning Assistant allocation within the school. I am sure that the team will contact you directly to make arrangements prior to their visit.

**Sponsored Walk**

We are so thankful to each one of you who contributed towards our sponsored walk. We are delighted to report that we raised £420!! We are hoping to buy a tablet for each classroom with this money.

**New Interactive Promethean Boards installed in Each Classroom**

D&G has been updating interactive technology in each classroom across the region. We have newly installed 65” panels installed in each room which resemble large television screens. This technology will enable us to improve our ICT provision in our schools.

**Remembrance Day**

All pupils plan to visit the war memorial on Friday 10th November at 10.45am to lay a wreath. You are very welcome to visit too. We will have a two minute silence at 11am.

***Please note that further information will be included in the November newsletter.***

**Fundraising Updates**

We discussed fundraising opportunities for the coming year. It was felt that the as families are under increasing financial pressure over the Christmas period especially that we would leave the hamper raffle until Spring this year. The following schedule was agreed

* My Child’s Art Christmas fundraiser
* Haggis Drive – end of January
* Prize Bingo evening in Castle Douglas ( including hamper raffle) March
* Summer BBQ – Held at the end of the summer term at Gelston School

We also discussed the possibility of organising an informal night out for all parents in December/January after the success of the last night organised.

Actions

* Pam to renew gambling licence
* Kay to look at possible dates for night out
* Pam to summarise last years events in an email for Mary to distribute