

**Gelston Primary Parent Council**

**Term 3 Meeting Minutes**

**8th February 2024 at 7.30pm via Zoom**

1. **Welcome** – Attending- Mary, Pam, Kay, Abbie, Emma,

Apologies- Justine, Jess

1. **Review** of any outstanding matters/update from previous meeting- all outstanding matters were addressed & confirmed as complete
2. **Chair Report**

The plans for the outdoor classroom have moved on significantly since our last meeting. Mary met with Sovereign Play’s Area Sales Manager (Ben Waine) who provided us some advice on the design and also gave us a quote. After speaking with Larann he agreed that this would be a more favourable option as Sovereign Play already have all the necessary risk assessments and design liabilities that would be required for the council to approve the build. In order to allow the project to go ahead with Sovereign Play we were advised to obtain 4 quotes for the build explaining why we had chosen Sovereign Play to complete the project. We went ahead and sourced these quotes. See separate notes on item 6.

1. **Treasurer Report**

Account Balance as of 29th February 2024 £2750.90

This includes deposits of £64.29 from Crestline (Christmas Art sales) and £81.50 raised at the Haggis Drive. The only deduction is £17.88 to purchase bingo books & dabbers in preparation for the our Bingo evening.

1. **Head Teacher Report**

**Self-Evaluation**

Every year, we gather a variety of evidence to help us evaluate our strengths and next steps as a school. We use this evidence to inform us of school development priorities for the following academic year.

We need to ensure that the evidence is good quality and is taken from a wide variety of sources. The types of evidence we gather each year is:

* **DIRECT OBSERVATIONS:** Including observations of lessons and sampling pupils’ work
* **QUANTITATIVE DATA:** Attainment data, standardised assessments, contextualised data and attainment data
* **PEOPLE’S VIEWS:** Staff, pupils, parents/carers, partners and other stakeholders such as the local authority become involved in surveys, focus groups, ongoing professional dialogue, learning visits and minutes of team meetings.

This academic year, we asked all stakeholders to complete a survey. Later this term, we will share the results with the Pupils Council, Parent Council, staff and the wider community.

**Attainment Over Time**

One of my key priorities is to raise attainment. Since taking up the post of Headteacher in October 2018, we have seen an increase in overall attainment over time. The pandemic and subsequent school closures, led to dips in attainment.

I meet with teaching staff in October, January and April to look at pupils’ achievement of a curricular level data (ACEL). We discuss each pupil and whether they are ‘on track’ or ‘not on track’ to achieve the national expectation for their year group. We then put detailed action plans in place to decide whether individuals require universal support through differentiated tasks in class or whether they require targeted interventions delivered by a Learning Assistant or Additional Support for Learning Teacher. We regularly review the impact of this on individual learners and ensure that we are meeting their needs.

I am delighted to inform you that we are meeting the needs of the majority of pupils in our school and partnership. We know when to request additional support from other agencies and we are reporting positive outcomes for most children. This is very positive!

The challenge we face is that we need more Learning Assistant hours so that we can deliver more targeted interventions to help us close the attainment gap. Unfortunately, with the Local Authority needing to save £40 million over the next five years, there is not enough money for us to gain any additionality.

I have spent a great deal of time reviewing and re-allocating time where and when I have capacity. Please know that I am extremely proud of our staff team and the way that we work to ensure the best outcomes for our children given the challenges that we face.

**Communication**

I would like to thank all parents/ guardians for your patience as we try to improve our methods of communication once more. We decided to re-instate our class Facebook pages and now have a Whole School administration page too.

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

We were expecting to have our collaborative review in Term 2. Unfortunately, we have had no further communication about this. I understand that the Supporting Learners Team is under pressure. We hope to inform you of a date soon.

**Finances**

We are trying our best to manage our budgets under very challenging circumstances. In school, we have three budgets:

* Devolved School Management budget (from the Local Authority)
* The School Fund (cheque book account housing fundraising and donations and grants); and
* The Pupil Equity Funding budget (provided by Scottish Government to target specific pupils to close the poverty related attainment gap
* Our balances are sitting at:

DSM = £909.41

PEF = NIL

School Fund = £3,300 (approximately)

Our PEF budget is supposed to pay for targeted interventions to reduce the poverty related attainment gap and I need to report the impact back to Scottish Government via our Local Authority. This year, I have had no option but to use all of the Crossmichael PEF (£26K) and all of Gelston’s PEF (£5K) on children in Crossmichael who require 1:1 support for their additional support needs. This is because we did not receive enough hours from the Supporting Learners Team to meet the basic health and safety needs of our most vulnerable pupils. Health and Safety is more important that reducing the attainment gap.

I have struggled to justify this as this goes against my professional values of ensuring equity and fairness. I have been able to ask my Learning Assistant at Gelston to complete some PEF interventions with children there. In effect, I am ‘robbing Peter to pay Paul’! I think it is important for parents to understand the pressures that all schools are under in he current financial climate and I am believe that we have done everything possible to manage this. We continue to review provision regularly and re-allocate resources where possible.

***Please note further generic information in the January 2024 Newsletter on our website and Facebook pages.***

1. **Outdoor classroom update** 
   1. meeting attended by Ben Waine from Sovereign Play to discuss our options in order that we can make the best possible use of the money we have.

Ben agreed to reduce the quote to £10K to fit our budget and it was agreed that we go ahead with the following option:

5 m hexagonal design with 4 perspex panels. The structure won’t have a central pole and will sit at the edge of the grass to reduce the need for a mulch path to help reduce costs.

All timber will be pressure treated with a 20 year warranty. Furthermore we will receive included in the costings a 5 year compliance package which will entitle us to an inspection of the structure twice a year. Beyond the 5 years it will cost £500 for a further 5 years cover.

Ben to send an updated quote to Mary asap to allow as to get the 4 quotes to the council as soon as we can to get the project on the go!

1. **Fundraising**

Planning of Prize bingo evening in March with Raffle

Actions

* Emma contact Threave Rovers to check prices & availability for bingo night
* Kay to contact with British Legion to check for prices & availability for bingo night
* Pam to order raffle tickets once date is set
* Mary agreed to hold a non uniform day where children brought a ‘prize ‘ to school instead of bringing a monetary donation- to be arranged once the date has been finalised
* Pam to source bingo books/dabbers to sell at a cost of £6 a book and £1 a dabber
* Parent council members to source raffle prizes and encourage support from wider parent group

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