



Our Lady of the Missions Primary School Parent Council

Minutes of Meeting – May 18 2017

The meeting was called to order by chair Gillian Boyle at 7:00pm

Approval of Minutes

The March 23 minutes will be approved by the council via email.

Welcomes

Gillian Boyle introduced new head teacher Catherine Dillon Ruddy and newly-elected councilor Colm Merrick.

Thanks

Gillian Boyle thanked former East Renfrewshire Councillors Mary Montague, Ralph Robertson and Gordon McCaskill for their support of the Parent Council over the years.

Working Groups

Standardised Testing Michelle Hynes noted plans to enhance the inserts in pupil report cards and provide information for new parents in an easy Q&A format.

Some of the parents were wary about the proposed nationwide testing and how this would be explained to parents. Josephine McGrotty feels that parents need to know the format for tests and whether teachers will be able to judge appropriate levels for pupils as they do in East Renfrewshire schools. C Dillon Ruddy adds that the East Renfrewshire tests are well-established.

Traffic Group Chris McLaughlin confirmed he is unable to continue running the group due to time constraints. He asked the council / the working group to take on the tasks in the group, but he would continue to assist them with ongoing developments.

Playground Group The development of the planned outdoor learning area is ongoing, and the group are planning gardening and painting days for parents and pupils.

The group also encouraged parents to collect fundraising tokens at TESCO stores around the school community (e.g. Silverburn store), which would go towards a £4000 grant earmarked for the chestnut garden.

Diversity/Inclusion Group The diversity group will host their coffee morning soon, and they are currently working towards the objectives that they introduced in the previous meeting (March 23 2017).

Food Group Joanne Logan asked the council about the Food Group. G Boyle said that Karen is currently away on business, but their activities will be reinstated once C Dillon-Ruddy officially takes office.

School Development Plan

Catherine Dillon-Ruddy led this discussion of the ideas she would like to put in place at the school when she takes over next year. She wants to share initial drafts of suggestions from both adults and children, and is looking to parents to form sub-groups in order to work with staff on the following aspects of school life:

- Digital learning – Dillon Ruddy would like the school to follow in Mearns Primary's example and receive a digital award used to fund coding and RasPi activities. The use of laptops and tablets with wifi would allow the school to free up space taken by bulky ICT equipment.
- Health/World of Work Weeks – activities from these special weeks would be spread throughout the school year
- Library – establishing infant and senior libraries
- Cooking school – there would be dedicated cooking stations within the infant school, but also increased efforts throughout the whole school
- Nurture centres – these spaces would provide opportunities for pupils dealing with bereavement or other personal issues
- Fully-equipped art/music learning centres
- Introducing school-wide *First News* subscriptions for print and online use
- 'Playful Pedagogy' to help with the transition from nursery to primary school
- Working with the community, educational cluster, council and Government in order to celebrate the centenary of Catholic Education in 2018.

C Dillon-Ruddy is yet to receive feedback from pupils, but she did joke that some of the pupils said that "the teachers eat all of the cakes during cooking!" The developments will take time, but she hoped to have lots of support from parents, staff and pupils. The drafts will be posted on to the school website when approved, and then condensed to pupil and parent-friendly leaflets. She also requested that a group of parents meet to discuss the plan in more detail in the next few weeks.

Jo Heraghty asked about the budgets. C Dillon-Ruddy has applied for funding for the libraries and cooking stations.

Michael McKenzie thought spreading the theme weeks throughout the year is a good idea.

Judy Taggart wanted to know more about nurture rooms. C Dillon-Ruddy explained that these are spaces outside the classroom environment that would be used for exploring feelings/art therapy sessions and learning support. At Mearns Primary, these spaces are used for breakfast and homework clubs, helping pupils having problems with friendship groups and as a venue for parent drop-ins.

G Boyle asked about staffing. C Dillon-Ruddy says that the nurture room activities will be supported by trained teachers, Support for Learning staff and additional funded staff.

Achievements and Successes

G Boyle liked Health/World of Work Weeks.

Joanne Logan congratulated the tennis team who came second today.

Pauline Murphy thought that the P2 Stages Mass was beautiful.

Michelle Hynes thought the choir at the First Communions was beautiful.

Acting Head Teachers Report

First Communions and Confirmations at St Vincent de Paul and St Joseph's Parishes were fabulous and "blessed with the sunshine."

The work on the new bin storage area is complete.

The SCIAF 5k fun run on June 24 is open to kids and adults.

P7 went on an evangelical trip to Cartsbridge.

The school has launched a TESCO bags appeal, and are hoping to win a grant of £5000 between May-June for the chestnut garden.

The used uniform sale run by the PC will take place at the summer fete.

Health Week and World of Work Weeks went very well, and the school enjoyed a helicopter flyover and a variety of activities.

STV Weatherman Sean Batty attended the “Four seasons in One Day” event where he was hit with custard pies and drenched with water. The event was filmed for television.

The P1s are taking part in the “Fit for Friday” pilot scheme where they will learn about healthy eating and fitness.

The new laptops, tablets, Chromebooks and Kindle Fires are working well.

The Rosary Group is well-attended.

The P6/7 netball team won the East Renfrewshire final.

The quiz team defeated Mearns Primary in the Rotary Quiz.

Hannah Moore in P6 will be the voiceover in a catering DVD for P1 pupils.

Pupil Support Assistant Ellen Young is retiring (and was thanked for her contribution).

OLM's NQTs were successful in gaining full-time roles, with Marie McConvery staying at the school and Holly and Sarah moving to St Joseph's and St Cadoc's Primaries respectively.

AOCB

Faheem Bhatti raised a concern that families with more than one child can find it challenging to keep paying for regular fun days and activities like “Four Seasons...” and Easter / reindeer day / dress down days which seem to have become more regular.

He also asked for details of the admissions to p1 this year. Josephine McGrotty said that 140 children applied to get into P1 at OLM this year. All those applying were in the catchment area and as a result, the new admissions policy was applied. This meant children were admitted in accordance with the priorities set out in the admissions policy. Unfortunately this resulted in 3 children with siblings in school not gaining places. G Boyle reiterated the point made in the OLM PC response to the consultation on admissions that ERC should publish figures for each school on a regular basis to promote transparency and ensure parents can make informed decisions.

Chris McLaughlin wanted to know where the unsuccessful pupils were placed. J McGrotty said that they were placed in Clarkston, Thornliebank and St Joseph's Primaries.

C Dillon-Ruddy said that ERC schools are pretty full, but they are planning ahead and introducing new policies. C McLaughlin asked if the new Catholic school would be oversubscribed but no one present had information on this.

Claire Johnston and Pauline Murphy have not been contacted about the P1 welcome day.

International Day will take place in September 2017, and there will be a flyer released calling for such as contributions in art, music, food and sport. Michael McKenzie asked if pupils could wear international football strips. Anne Marie O'Brien hoped it would be an "all-weather activity day."

The Summer Fun Day will have free admission, with all activities under £1, and the School Discos will take place in June.

Next Meeting

June 22 2017, 7:00pm, Our Lady of the Missions Primary School.

Present

Anne Marie O'Brien, Judy Taggart, Jacqueline Stewart, Chris McLaughlin, Claire Johnston, Mary Cluckie, Mairead Brophy, Cllr Colm Merrick, Joanne Logan, Nicola Cochrane, Jacqueline Devlin, Catherine Dillon Ruddy, Gillian Boyle, Josephine McGrotty, Claire Bowes, Amogh Naik, Faheem Bhatti, Denis Heraghty, Jo Heraghty, Pauline Murphy, Michelle Hynes, Joe McLachlan, Michael Harvey