

# S1 Parents' Focus Group



**Tuesday 9 October 2018**



# Welcome and Prayer

## Present:

Josef Fuchs (Year Head)

Mark McKean (Pastoral Support Teacher)

Tony Low (Pastoral Support Teacher)

Sandra Curran (Joy Curran 1a2)

Richard Mowat (James Mowat 1a5)

Clare McIntyre (Niamh McIntyre 1a5)

Mhairi Harvey (Joseph Harvey 1a4)

Kathleen McBride (Bried McBride 1a1)

## School Prayer

Jesus, as a child you grew in learning and wisdom.  
Bless Saint Ninian's High School,  
a community of faith and love  
where young people learn,  
work and grow together.  
Help us to make our school a place  
where teachers are valued for their dedication;  
where pupils are encouraged  
to develop their talents  
and where all  
staff, young people and parents -  
work together  
in trust and friendship.  
Live among us now and forever.

**Amen**



# Our Relationships – S1 So Far

- **Transition**
- *The transition exercise was a positive experience.*
- *Transitions made a big difference as helped ease the transition from primary to secondary*
- *One of the benefits of having the transition programme was that it happened so early in the P7 Calendar. It then set the tone for the rest of the year whilst pupils were in P7.*
- *The timings were very beneficial. It helped to settle any anxiety pupils had.*
- *S6 involvement was excellent as P7 were aware from the get go about the importance on uniform and standards.*
- *Very impressed with the enhanced transition process. My daughter really felt like she was apart of the school before starting in in August.*
- *Having the transition so early in the year allowed the pupils to fully focus on the end of their P7*
- **Friendship request process**
- *My child is happy with the class that he is in and feels that this was a good exercise.*
- *It is a shame that there are no boys in his Alpha class who are from other schools. It would have been nice to have it mixed up a little bit more.*
- *P7 Pupils had been involved in exercises before coming to St. Ninian's but some parents felt that more could be done by the Primary schools e.g. cluster STEM events to expose pupils to more pupils from different schools.*
- *I feel it would be better if it was slightly more mixed in terms of pupils from different schools.*
- **P7 Information Evening**
- *Felt that it was good to hear from the other children in S6 and in S3 who were able to talk about their experiences in St. Ninian's.*
- *Parents really enjoyed the tour that happened before pupils started school and it was a very positive experience.*
- **P7 Induction Day**
- *The gradual introduction of the transitions has been a lot more powerful than other models in other schools. E.g. 3 days.*
- *Stress can be built up over a big event such as 3 days which can be a lot harder for both pupils and parents to manage.*
- **Settling In**
- *Very impressed about how quickly pupils have taken to the school and really have a feeling of belonging and apart of St. Ninian's.*
- *Pupils are proud of their school and happy to call it their own.*
- *I get a really strong feeling that my child is known by teachers and by her pastoral teacher.*
- *All staff have taken time to connect with the pupils as they have now come in to St. Ninian's.*
- *Staff have been welcoming to all pupils who have come to St. Ninian's.*



# Our Learning and Teaching

- **Learning and Teaching**
  - *The majority of things that I am hearing at home are about extra curricular clubs. All of this has been very positive.*
  - **Homework**
  - *My daughter has taken to balancing the level of homework that she has so far. Quite early to make a real judgement as to whether my child is worried about it.*
  - *My daughter is very motivated to do her homework. Impressed that the homework is well aimed at my child's stage of learning.*
  - *Level/amount of homework has been fine. The homework diary has been excellent in terms of communication between home and the class teacher.*
  - *We are struggling to know what homework our child has.*
  - *JF – timelines available on school website. If concerned, call Pastoral Teacher to investigate.*
  - *I am impressed how well my child is managing her time and I feel that she has been given some help and support to achieve this.*
  - *I would have liked a bit of guidance on how much time should be spent on studying each night. E.g. 30 mins on each subject. This would be good to know so that I can advise my child.*
  - *MMcK – school would recommend approximately 45-60 mins per night. Daily homework for Maths, English (reading) and French. Most other subjects weekly or fortnightly.*
- **Maths Block Test**
  - *My daughter was up to high do! We dealt with it by putting it in the context that it is not the end of the world.*
  - *Felt that it really did capture my child's enthusiasm to study for something as it was their first big test.*



# Our Health and Wellbeing

- JF – school always promoted Health and Wellbeing through development of whole child. Increased promotion of the work that taking place so parents more aware of this.
- *Delighted with emphasis on this and hearing this from Mr Docherty, Mr Fuchs and Pastoral Staff about this.*
- *Was worried that the school would put an emphasis on “5 A’s”, however I am glad to hear that there has been a big push on the promotion of mental health.*
- *I like the idea that pupils are being pushed to “do their best” and not do “the best” in the class.*
- *Peer relationships are important and can be used positively to help pupils develop, but this competition should be healthy.*
- *I feel that as a parent of a number of pupils who have come through the school that all our children have felt that they have been valued and well thought of as they have come through the school.*
- *I would agree with this comment that our children have been so well supported and been encouraged to engage with new friends, the faith life of the school and the extra curricular programme in the school.*



# Our Successes and Achievements

- **How Achievements are Celebrated**
- JF – successes and achievements posted on school website, Twitter, Assemblies, Pupil of the Month, Badges
- *We love the badges – more badges please!*
- *I find that I am trying to get to grips with the amount of information that is online on the school website. I have a little bit of learning to go but I have felt a little bit overwhelmed with the amount of information*
- JF - streamlined this by having an S1 only web page on the school website that has all relevant information for S1 pupils. e.g. trips etc.
- JF - There is also a parental involvement tab on the school website for parents to be able to read over and show how we are engaging with parents.
- *It would be good to see what kind of clubs and what type of things the young people are going to.*
- JF – Extra-curricular Club Booklet on S1 website.
- *My son has enjoyed all the clubs. He really enjoys going to the clubs and likes the way that he can try a variety of clubs.*
- JF - There are clubs such as homework clubs that are on every fortnight that pupils can utilise.
- *My daughter really enjoys the clubs but found it hard to choose as all the good clubs are on a Wednesday.*
- *The clubs on offer are TOO good!*
- *Loyalty card - my child has had the cards but has unfortunately lost their card and the stamps that they had collected.*
- JF – please ask child to see me and I will get new one for them.
- *I have been worrying about getting my child organised in terms of their bag.*
- *First year there is a lot to take on and a long way to go. In my experience pupils will get there. This is a year where pupils have to learn an awful lot.*
- *Very much appreciate focus on Faith and developing God given talents.*

# Any Other Competent Business

- **Subject Rotations / Choice**
- *Changing subjects. When is this happening?*
- JF - Timetable changes will be happening after the October week but will be staggered. i.e. Maths first and then so on with other subjects.
- *Concerned about pupils that do not like change and want to make sure this is done in smooth a way as possible.*
- JF - The S1 subject choice happens so early so that young people give themselves the best possible chance of progression in their academic studies.
- *I did think this was something that caused me a little cause for concern.*
- *As a parent with pupils who have previously come through the school that choice at the end of S1 is absolutely the right thing for them in terms of motivation, interest, behaviour in classes, preparation for SQA.*
- *My children found choice very easy and knew immediately the subjects they were going to pick and those they wanted to avoid.*
- MMcK - When the transition process is carried out with S1 pupils, it tends to be very straight forward. Pupils can find it harder choosing S5 and S6 subjects.
- JF - BGE is taken in to account but we look at whole package in terms of extra curricular opportunities for all pupils and ensuring they have excellent experiences.
- **S1 Photos**
- *Didn't appreciate difference between boys and girls with 'informal' pose.*
- JF – will discuss this with the photographer
- **Reports**
- *The reports that recently came out were very helpful.*
- **Thank You**
- JF thanked all parents and staff for attending and for their valued contributions.
- **Next Meeting**
- Will have another Parent Focus Group in June to review S1.