**Aberdour Primary School Parent Council Meeting Minutes**

**Monday 15th May 2023 7.00pm at Aberdour Primary School**

Minutes by Linsay McDonald

1. **Present:** Gareth Williams (Chair and P7 Rep), Alison Johnson (Nursery Rep), Claire Stewart (P1 Rep), Linsay McDonald (Secretary and P2 Rep), Pete Johnson (P3 Rep), Claire Matthews (P4 Rep), Wendy Hutchinson (P5 Rep), Louise Wood (Head Teacher), Gillian Cormack (Principal Teacher), Leanne Sweaton (Acting Principal Teacher), Councillor Dave Dempsey, Councillor David Barratt, Councillor Sarah Neal, Finn Weddle (P1 parent).

**Apologies:** None. Claire Stewart is standing is as rep for the current P6 class; Katie Contreras has volunteered to represent this class next session as P7 rep.

1. **Confirmation of minutes/actions arising from last meeting**

Minutes of last meeting were confirmed and there were no actions noted.

1. **Head teacher update**

*School improvement plan- reading:* LW reported that after meeting with a parent group on approaches to reading, a pilot study on improvements to reading homework is underway. Pupils in P1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 are taking part and are trialling a choice of reading comprehension activities based on their reading book; these activities are set out similarly to the activity grid used for spelling homework in the past. The aim is to make reading homework more engaging and to move away from literacy circles, which are only successful if all pupils are completing their homework. The reading comprehension activities will be applicable to fiction, non-fiction, and poetry books. This trial will end in May and the school will then collate feedback on the approach. There have also been some updates made to the school’s phonics and spelling policies this session. SN asked if homework approaches are shared with other schools in the cluster if they are successful. LW replied that they could be, but it would depend on other schools’ priorities.

*Classes for 23/24 session:* LW reported that the school role is decreasing, and it is a possibility that there will be 6 classes formed next session, rather than 7. The population/birth rate in Fife is currently decreasing and other primary schools in the cluster are also experiencing a drop in pupil numbers. There is also a small cohort of P1s starting next year at present; this may change nearer to August. If composite classes are formed the school will look to create a more even split of pupils from each year in the classes, and this would be decided primarily by date of birth. LW also said that she would look at timetabling opportunities for year groups to get together for certain activities. LS added that play provision is the same in the nursery, P1 and P2 classrooms, so children in these classes will still have the same access to opportunities for learning through play.

CS asked how this would be communicated to parents and GW added that, based on the last time classes were composited, parents may appreciate the opportunity to discuss class structure. LW replied that she was monitoring the position and would communicate with parents towards the end of May or start of June.

LM highlighted that the current P2 class have had probationer teachers for both P1 and P2. While both years have been positive, the parents feel that, at this early formative stage, the children would now benefit from an experienced teacher next session if possible. LW acknowledged this while pointing out that if the classes are composited, that would mean considering 2 members of staff. She also must accommodate staff requests for year groups and probationer provision from the council.

PJ highlighted that the transition from P2 to P3 can be difficult for some children, as there is a shift from a majority of play-based learning to more formal learning. LS said they have reflected on this and looked at the balance between play and formal learning in the early years. The school think that this year, the change from P2 to P3 may have been too great and are considering how to smooth the transition next year, by starting with more play in term 1 and gradually changing the balance over the course of the session.

ACTION: LW to inform Parent Council and parents about likely position on the school role and composite classes, as well as plans to support pupil transitions.

1. **Play-based learning**

LS gave an update on play-based learning. She said that APS had hosted a SEIC (South East Improvement Collaborative) learning school meeting last week and the feedback from other participating schools was very positive. On Thursday 25th May at 6.30 pm the school will host a curriculum evening, which all parents and carers are welcome to attend. This will showcase learning through play throughout the whole school, with a particular focus on the upper school, and include interviews with pupils and staff. LS has been working on a document detailing what play should look like across all classes in the school and will show this to staff for feedback. Responsive planning forms have also been developed to allow learning through play to be documented and recorded, and pupils can self-reflect on play-based learning through play plenary boards and discussion with class teachers.

ACTION: Parent Council reps to highlight play-based learning meeting to parents.

1. **Digital culture**

GC reported that she had recently visited a SEIC learning school for digital learning and observed a lot of similarities with work being carried out at APS and therefore now feels confident in applying for a Digital Schools Award. This will involve a visit from the affiliated association at some point next year.

ACTION: GC to present on bid at next meeting of the Parent Council.

1. **AOB**

*Pupil attendance rates:* GW asked for an update after a push from Fife Council earlier in the session to improve attendance. LW said that rates at APS are hovering around the target provided by the council, and absences were mostly due to illness or parents taking pupils out of school during term time for holidays. SN asked if school refusal due to anxiety was a contributing factor to absence, but LW said this wasn’t significant at APS.

*Meeting of parent council chairs in the Inverkeithing cluster:* GW said that the chair of Inverkeithing Primary School parent council has requested a meeting with other chairs from the high school cluster. LW highlighted that representatives from Education Scotland are currently gathering opinions, including from pupils, on the new high school to be built in Rosyth.

*Microsoft forms:* LW has rectified problems with information on school trips etc. being inaccessible after completion of Microsoft forms, and this information will now also be sent in the body of the email along with the form.

*Sun cream for P1 children:* CS asked about sun cream for P1 pupils and LW and GC replied that this should be self-administered or applied at home before school if required.

*Spring show:* All class reps noted their thanks to the staff for all their hard work in producing such an enjoyable spring show. LM asked if staff may consider asking parent volunteers to serve teas and coffees between drop off and the start of the evening show next year rather than having an interval.

*AGM:* The next AGM of the parent council will be held towards the start of next session. As GW will no longer be a class rep, this is likely to include a change in the chair.