

**Parent Council Meeting 4th September 2023**

**Zoom Meeting**

**Present:** Amanda O’Donoghue (Chair), Geri Collins (HT), Karen Carruthers, Jennifer Cassidy, Linda Biggins (Clerk), Katie Ferguson (Pastoral Care), Julie Brown (Treasurer), Gill Docherty, Joanne Ferguson, Laura McInally, Alison Pearson, Jigjit Kaur Tait, Mrs Waugh.

**Apologies:** Lesley Best, , Gail Thomson, Jacqueline Docherty, Jill Stevenson, Jade Graham,

**Minutes of Last Meeting**

The Minutes of last meeting 5th June 2023 were approved.

**Matters Arising**

A visit from the Quality Improvement Officer (Kathryn Farrow) in June together with the completed Health Checks has prompted us to look at:

· Our direction of travel as a parent council

· Ways we can canvas the thoughts and opinions of 1,153 parents and carers

· Ensure that the agenda items are set by parent council members based on agreed sitting items or by the thoughts and views of the wider parent forum

· Ways we can align our work with the Improvement Plan Priorities of Hillpark

· Becoming more visible and accessible to the wider parent forum at school events

· Organising Parent Council events to raise the profile of the work that we do

· Identifying a number of standing items for our agenda and for parent council members to report on progress each month on said agenda items

· Subcommittees for specific agenda items

It was agreed that although the Head Teacher Report should still take place each month, this should not become the sole agenda item for the parent council and should only take up a few moments of the meeting.

It was further agreed that given the reframing of the parent council, the September meeting should not be the AGM as this will now take place in October.

**Head Teachers Report**

**Freshers Fayre**

A huge success with around 30 clubs brought to the attention of the pupils. The clubs can be found on the school website.

**New roll**

S1 – Full at 240

S2 – 213

S3 – Full at 210

S4 – 194

S5 – 178

S6 – 118

**Results**

S4 Level 3

2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023

(98.6%) (95.9%) (98.2%) (92.2%) (92.7%) (95.5%)

Projection for 2024 (99.5%)

S4 Level 4

2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023

(76.9%) (71.6%) (85.6%) (81.6%) (86.3%) (89.4%)

Fabulous result and only beaten by 5 other schools in the city

S4 Level 5

2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023

(27.2%) (27.7%) (30.5%) (31.3%) (31.2%) (25.1%) projection (49.7%) This is a disappointing result with 22 pupils achieving 4 National 5 passes and a D in the 5th subject. If successful these borderline pupils would have increased this figure to 36%.

Next Steps: Targeted support for our border line group working towards 5 National 5 awards.

S5 1 at Level 6 (Higher)

2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023

(48.4%) (55.1%) (59.5%) (53.9%) (48.3%) (47.5%) projection (69.8%) This is a disappointing result which again reflects the challenges faced by borderline pupils.

Next Steps: Targeted support for our border line group working towards 1 Higher.

S5 3 at Level 6 (Higher)

2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023

(19.6%) (20.4%) (31.1%) (29.9%) (27%) (27.5%) projection (37.2%) This is an encouraging statistic as the young people despite the challenges of the previous years have maintained standards.

S5 5 at Level 6 (Higher)

2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023

(7.8%) (9.52%) (12.2%) (17.4%) (14%) (13.7%) projection (16.1%) This is an encouraging statistic as the young people despite the challenges of the previous years have maintained standards.

Action Points:

Moving forward we will continue to support the vast majority of the pupils with raising attainment mentors while other groups will benefit from Master classes, targeted supported study or a reduced and more focused timetable.

**Senior awards Ceremony**

This year’s Senior Awards Ceremony will be slightly earlier than normal on Thursday September 14th. The pupils receiving an award for Attendance, Effort or Excellence were informed on Friday and given letters home with two tickets to attend. Rehearsals will begin Monday 11th September.

**Land Tortoise**

Our Science department tortoise joined us today through Creature Comforts. Pupils will be asked to help provide a name for the new addition to the school.

The following was not discussed due to other agenda points for the meeting but is included as information for parent council:

**Dates to consider:**

S4 Track issued 15th September

Flu vaccinations 26th and 27th September

S1 track issued 29th September

S3 track issued 29th September

**Whole School Improvement Plan 2023/24**

· Evaluate the appropriateness of our Values (ASPIRE) – Ask all stakeholders. Achieving, Supportive, Positive, Included, Respectful, Equal.

o Do we want to continue with the acronym ASPIRE. Yes / no

o If we continue with ASPIRE are there better words we can use? Please provide suggestions for :A, S, P, I, R, E.

· Review current Health and Wellbeing policy. Parents Council to represent Parent Forum when evaluating our current Policy. This will be led by B Haldane.

· We need to improve our data analysis of tracking within the BGE in order to ensure effective interventions designed to improve outcomes for our learners. Parent council to help wider Parent forum to understand BGE tracking in line with Curriculum for Excellence. Workshops could be organised inviting parents and carers into the school.

· Continued partnership working within the Collaborative Improvement Group will support improvement when assessing progress within the BGE. Members of Parent Council to be part of collaborative improvement programme looking at IDL across the BGE.

· Embrace diversity through celebration of Music, food and sports etc to include all nationalities within the school community/dept. Parent Council to support any such events.

· The continued reinforcement of the wellbeing indicators to ensure that they are embedded within the culture of the school. Parent Council to regularly seek the views of the wider Parent Forum and raise as agenda items at Parent Council meetings

· Could the parent council be more involved in supporting young people towards a positive destination – mock interviews, subject knowledge / skills required to secure a job? How would this be organised etc.

· Departments will continue to think creatively when engaging parents and carers. Can Parent council support our parents and carers either informally (Cosy café) or through parents evenings – S4/5/6 have an extra parents evening now.

· We will continue to improve our communication channels including, groupcall, twitter, facebook and our website. Could Parent Council have their own channel for communication with the parent forum?

· We need to improve our systems for monitoring parental participation. How do we measure this within the parent council?

All Parent Council ideas welcome

**Parent Comments**

With regard to the results Amanda commented that the Covid years had indeed made it difficult for the students. Also that it was positive to see that the school was full. Mrs Collins confirmed that there is now a waiting list of pupils to attend and that the catchment is large and many of the new build estates fall within our area. Amanda also checked if there was a full complement of staff, Mrs Collins confirmed they do.

Amanda asked if Zoom or in person meetings would be better? Jigjit wondered if those without access to or were familiar with electronic devices were put off joining, it may be more difficult for LCR parents and for parents with english as a second language to be on Zoom. Amanda is keen that we reflect the school community and is quite happy for us to have a table at Parents nights if this will help engage more. Katie wondered if we should also have a table at the P5-7 evening - as this may encourage new folk (who may already be on parent council at primary) to join in secondary. Jennifer also commented that we are not an overly diverse group. Julie voiced that a lot of parents do want to raise issues however don't wish to go to the school. Perhaps we could have a Parent Council email address? Mrs Collins pondered if we could have a parent council corner on the website where issues could be addressed? Amanda also let the Council know that at a previous primary there had been an informal Facebook group set up which was not always constructive. Any way we communicate needs to be a constructive avenue. Alison wondered if Microsoft Forms could be used - get seniors involved in creating the form to ask for feedback/questions. Mrs Collins said they could also use QR codes at events - but make sure that the questions are few and tailored - eg Option 1 = X, Option 2 = Y, if there are a lot of questions folk don't tend to respond.

Mrs Collins asked if the ASPIRE values were fit for purpose - and wondered if she could hand these over to Parent Council? Jennifer pondered how do the students feel about ASPIRE - it is theirs to "own". Amanda wondered if our views would reflect the wider parent forum? Though also balanced this with that we try to do things for the best of the whole of the populous. Katie made comment that a smaller Parent Council was actually very effective - we have a strong functioning council at the moment. Amanda asked which form of communication the school gets the most response from? Mrs Collins confirmed text was best, however this is very expensive to use. Generally all information goes via email. Amanda asked if Xpressions could be used? Jigjit commented on how we could attract Parents? What do the parent council actually do? What our role is? What piece of work we could develop? At times she felt a little unsure of her role/impact. Mrs Collins was disappointed to hear this as she finds the role of the Council invaluable in forming policy - and whilst her queries are not necessarily framed as this is Policy X or Y - her queries were always used to ensure that her policy reflected our voice. Noted over the years she has found the Parent Council an invaluable source of information and support.

Linda raised the new reporting for S1-3 and if the progress part of the report would be explained/equal for all subjects? Amanda also raised that at times homework is marked as "good" even if there is no homework? Mrs Collins confirmed that this was being looked at by Mr Haldane and although not all subjects could be graded the same or have one rule for progress for each subject there would be guidelines for Parents. Mrs Waugh confirmed that Maths have detailed discussions regarding grading and making sure that this is fair and reflective of the students’ effort and put a lot of time into this.

Jigjit raised that the monthly certificates do not always align (ie the writing on them goes off the page) and that the quality was at times poor. Mrs Collins was sorry to hear this and has asked her to send examples for this to be noted and fixed going forward.

School Uniform

Due to the rather unexpected warm weather in June it was difficult to enforce school uniform. Mrs Collins is keen to hear the council views on perhaps bringing in a "relaxed" or alternate uniform for the hot weather? Linda asked if the kids could be involved in design and also could cost be kept in mind given the current economic situation. Julie also commented that the very hot weather is perhaps only 15 days a year - given this, and the expense of additional uniform, could there not be a relaxed version of what we already have (ie ties loosened etc). Jennifer asked if the school could just allow PE kit to be worn those days - eg shorts/shirt/hoodie. Amanda also commented that the skirts can be somewhat short - but at times as parents we have to choose our battles! Mrs Waugh commented that as teachers it is about having an "appropriate" level of dress in the classroom and having girls in Nike Pros and Crop tops or boys in football shorts was not in line with this. Katie also shared that the children who are not coming into school in school uniform can cause a health and safety issue as they are not easily recognisable as being part of the school...it could be anyone on campus. Karen asked if the "summer" uniform could be worn from Easter to October to perhaps get more wear out of it? Jigjit asked if the parents of the children who were dressed inappropriately were contacted? Or if the school keeps a "stock" of uniform that could perhaps be given to those who did not dress in uniform? Mrs Collins advised it is very difficult for the school as Parents can choose to send their children to school in other clothes and not uniform and they cannot enforce children changing into school uniform.

**Any Other Business**

Linda asked if Principal Teachers being disrupted during their teaching time caused a negative impact on the cohort they were teaching? Mrs Collins asked Linda to call the school re this - given that examples would need to be given and this may involve names, Linda was keen to stress this impacted lots of students and was not in essence about her child - any examples used would be to give a flavour of a situation to highlight/explain impact.

Amanda asked if we would be inviting Councillors to the AGM - Mrs Collins advised Amanda to go ahead and ask them. Katie advised this would be a group call inviting anyone interested to come. Amanda also advised she has been Chair for a number of years and if anyone was interested in taking over, then please feel free to contact her/put themselves forward.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 9th October AGM at 6.30pm followed by Parent Council at 7pm - this will be held in the school.