

Kirknewton Primary School Parent Council Meeting minutes (held via Zoom @ 8pm)

Wednesday 1st June 2022

Present: Lesley Dicker, Pip Shiels, Kirsten Patience, Adele Murphy, Barbara Dunlop, Isla Veal, Simon Fuller, Amanda Blainey, Angela Hogg, Barbara Padarasz, Fenella (Orla P1), Fiona Cain, Kara Payne, Laura Stewart, Pamela Berry, Sara Wilczynska, Vic Guthrie, Sarah McNee, Angela Herkes (joined later), Evelina Hill, Jen Coleman, Rebecca (?).

Apologies: Ross Blackwood, Angela Herkes, Laura Shepherd.

1. Welcome and Apologies (PS)
2. Approval of previous minutes – all OK.
3. Head teacher update (KP):

Staffing update – Class information has been shared with all parents and carers. School has been allocated a Free probationer (more info to follow). Mr Buckley (replaced by Katherine Sexton) and Mrs Ritchie (replaced by Leanne Cochrane) still absent currently. Mrs DeLara is leaving the Nursery due to securing a new post at Ogilvie working with Children with ASN. Mrs Linney about to go off on Maternity leave in September. Posts currently advertised for their replacements. Mrs Dunlop will be taking over the Principal Teacher for Mrs Murphy's Maternity leave.

Celebrating successes from the past year – Started off the year by agreeing what high quality Learning & Teaching looked like in KPS. Now have a very clear L&T policy across the school. Have achieved the Silver UNCRC award. Embedded HWB curriculum across the school. This is one of the strongest aspects of the school at the moment. Developed an Equalities programme which has been successful with the children and very engaging. Embedded Play-based learning across P1-3 setting with support of Angela Duffy (Early Years practitioner) which will continue into next year. Developed consistency of MFL across the school and successful twinned school with school in France. Introduced Spanish culture and language across the school. Introduced Sustainable learning and partners in the Kirknewton comic which the children have enjoyed. Silver Award achieved for Reading Schools accreditation (lead by Mrs Bird) and created reciprocal reading characters, which will be shared with community soon. Develop Numeracy approaches across P1&2 and this is to extended into the Nursery next session and up through the upper school. School have been experimenting with "Maths through Story" which will be started next session.

Steps for next year:

To continue with UNCRC and to work with the community to develop this further. Focus on developing "One Trusted Adult" approach to support children should they ever need them. Revisit the principles of "Getting it Right for Every Child" and refresh rules & anti-bullying policy or next year. Develop pupil-profiling system to allow children to document their own learning and to understand themselves better as learners. Develop Leadership opportunities for all children across the school.

Numeracy & Maths – implement the Numicon intervention for specific children to revisit their gaps in learning and get them up to speed. Shared standards across the cluster for Numeracy and staff development opportunities will be offered to support this. Develop a Number Talks progression across the school to ensure consistency across numeracy working walls and vocabulary within numeracy to be shared with parents and carers. Fully implement Math through story across the school.

Literacy / Writing – implement whole school handwriting scheme to make sure cursive is used through the school. Evaluate current writing approaches. Develop shared standards. Work with Balerno cluster to ensure shared standards. Refresh writing curriculum and systems for writing. Embed PM Writing as a resource across the school.

Sustainability – Link it with current curriculum and develop a 3 year plan to embed this fully. Mrs Dunlop has created "How Green is our school" to allow children to evaluate sustainability in the school. Develop Critical Thinking Skills and continue to develop community engagement. Working with local windfarm and going to develop links here also.

MFL (Modern Foreign Languages) – develop transition approaches in line with our secondary schools. Embed Camembert training P1-3 classes. Embed use of language resources across the school and continue to engage with both local and national events. Keen to continue with Twinning project and develop ambassador opportunities further.

Autonomy – looking at pedagogical approaches allowing for more autonomy next year. Work with 2 schools (Torphichen and Westfield primary schools) to look at how they have brought autonomy into their curriculum and they have used some interesting approaches. Going to visit the schools to see what could work in KPS. Audit children's opinions of autonomy across the school and offer staff training. Develop Play further across the school.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) – audit current approaches to this. One teacher will focus fully on this across the school and deliver a consistent approach to this for all. Staff training to develop teacher knowledge of STEM further.

West Calder High School Teaching Students – 6 university students to work between the high school and primary. Unique piece of work with Edinburgh University.

Wind Farm Donation – Developed a relationship with local farm who have donated £10,000 to the school to allow development of school grounds for learning.

Pupil roles for next year – Children in P6 have come up with their own ideas for Leadership roles across the school (e.g Climate defenders). New system to be developed across the school next year.

PVGs for parent volunteers – KP has sent out a message confirming new procedures for this. 7 new parents have contacted the school and able to help support the school.

4. Responses to questions raised by parents (PS/KP)

Sports Day Mixed Gender Races - many parents commented on the sense of unfairness for the girls having mixed gender races at sports day especially the running races. This would not happen in the Olympics!! Boys/males are physically stronger and faster than girls/females! None of the girls won the running races when competing with the boys. Many of them were disappointed and discouraged. Especially those who are athletic and look forward to competing against their peers every year. Please can we go back to the conventional single gender races for future sports days.

I have thought for some time about my response and spoken to the staff collectively. As a school, we have worked very hard on our equality curriculum. This has included gender equality in the past and this will be revisited again next session. We also have children across the school who identify as different genders, which we must always consider when planning events like this. Due to this, the staff organising the sports day agreed to do mixed gender races. However, we recognise that this has not led to a feeling of success within the running race for some of our pupils. As a staff, we have agreed that next year we will offer children the option to join a mixed running race, girl race or boy race. This will enable the children to make the choice, which is right for them on the day.

Singing and whole school assemblies

Some children are missing singing together and singing at whole school assemblies. Prior to Covid the children had weekly times of singing together, can this be reintroduced? We realise Mr Buckley used to do some of this, is there another teacher who could lead singing sessions or ask for parent helpers?

This is something we will be re-introducing fully after the summer holidays as classes are now allowed to be together in the assembly setting. We have begun doing this slowly already through the Olympian assembly and assembly with The Lord Lieutenant. We had to consider that some of our younger children have not experienced this before, and for others it has been over two years, so a gentle approach was necessary.

Specialisms (PE/Music etc.)

Losing Mrs Davidov who is qualified as a Secondary teacher. In order to get her full recognition as a teacher she has to go and do some time working in Secondary in order to fulfil her GTC registration requirements. KP looking to continue using the skillset she has brought to the school e.g Bikeability. STEM will take a priority across the school during RCCT time (teacher time out of class) and this time will be covered by Mrs BheBhe next year.

Photo Permissions

A question was raised regarding WLC policy in terms of taking photos of children. Parents have missed out on memories from Sports Day due to this. There are tight constraints on this. Children in school who are perhaps looked after or protected for various reasons and do not have permission to have photos taken of them and/or shared on social media. It is important for the school to manage this safely. This is regarding safety and respecting the rights of the parents and children who have indicated this requirement.

See link for more information: <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/32402/Education-Policies-and-Procedures?p=2&f=Metadata1789-16217>

Plans for p7 leavers

Parents have requested some more information on the plans for P7 learners leaving.

There will be an Assembly for parents and carers. Assembly to the rest of the school. Nice opportunity to get everyone together. Children have fundraised for their leaver's event. They have chosen to go Bowling and to have a meal together. They are going to do an art activity where they can create their own Keepsake to take away with them. They will have a Water fight at end of a day before they leave. They are going to go to Innoflate. They will have the opportunity to have pizza, sign hoodies etc on the last day of term and there will be an Ice cream van in the school on last day. Breakdown of the week should already have been emailed out to P7 parents.

School reports

17th June to be issued to parents.

Bikeability

If we cannot keep Mrs Davidov, another member of staff will be trained as a replacement if required to ensure it will continue next year. Certificates of completion to be issued in due course.

P3 Caricatures from Kirknewton Comic (LD)

These are apparently still on the wall in the P3 classroom but Mrs Bhebhe advised that these were issued home. KP looking into getting them re-done or reprinted. Individual images may be able to be extracted from the tea towel design. Check this with Debbie Douglas. KP to follow up.

Music provision (FC – P6 parents)

The music provision is covered by class teachers. Next year there will be a focus on reintroduction of Expressive Arts to make sure they are embedded into the Curriculum. School will not get a specialist for Music other than the instruments that children are offered from P5 upwards. May be able to use some skills from the Edinburgh University teaching students next session. KP to follow up.

5. Update from Focus Groups (LD and focus group leads)

(LD) Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the work the focus groups have been doing over the last year, we will be concluding all these groups for now and working with Mrs Patience and Mrs Dunlop on the plans outlined by Mrs Patience and aligning with the School Improvement Plan and, where appropriate the Pupil Leadership Roles. We will identify together area where parents can support the school and create new focus groups and projects that parents can contribute too. We will share more details about these opportunities when they are available.

- **Sustainability** (Clare Jack & Lesley Dicker):

Delighted to confirm that Susan from Muddy Boots will be offering gardening club again from August, there will be an opportunity to meet Susan and find out more at an initial tidy up on 22nd June – more details will follow.

- **Communications** (Lesley Dicker & Sarah McNee):

Sarah & Lesley helped shape and improve the information for P1 parents starting in August and identified information that can be shared on the website so all parents can access it as required. We supported the school to work with the council to become upskilled at updating the website and identifying areas that can be changed, within the constraints of West Lothian Council. The office staff are now confident they can make any changes required to the website. One of the key improvements has been including a School Events page on the website with key dates as an up to date reference point for parents: **School Events - Kirknewton Primary School** (westlothian.org.uk)

- **Health and Wellbeing** (Nicola Joergenson & Lesley Dicker)

Nicola delivered Netball for the P4-7 classes and games based children's stories for the P1-3 classes as part of sports week. Nicola has also been working with Mrs Patience & Mrs Murphy to organise an orienteering course and maps for the school that will be ready for next term. Helped school to secure their Silver award RRSA.

- **Funding applications** (Erin White & Fiona Cain):

Fiona and Erin have been working with Mrs Patience to identify appropriate funding applications to support the school to complement the £10,000 from the wind farm and the work being done by the PSA.

- **Twinning** (Geraldine Lucas):

Geraldine is continuing to support Mrs Hunter and the staff at the school in France to improve the links and identify ways for the pupils to connect; they are currently discussing a number of ideas. They are also looking into how the twinning could connect in with the lower school French lessons and have identified some additional French-speaking parents who could support this work.

The Focus Groups have been brilliant fun and are a great opportunity to learn more about how the school works and get to know some of the teachers more. They are also great for meeting different parents across different year groups and developing new skills whilst supporting the school and making a difference. We highly recommend getting involved if you are interested in the topics and projects identified by the school and anyone who has been involved previously would be happy to have a chat about it and provide support.

6. PSA update (SF)

- Fundraising parent body
- Banked a couple of funds: £167 collected from clothes sale (LS), £153 from loose change collection. Bank balance is currently £2350 – some money to be spent on covering P7 leavers event (£200). P7 leavers hoodies £300 approx. Meeting to happen next week to cover further funding proposals.

7. Class reps and office bearers for next year (PS)

Dan Veal volunteered to be the new Treasurer or Secretary of PSA. SF to contact Dan arrange handover.

Office bearers (Parent Council)

Chair – Pip Shiels

Vice Chair – to be appointed

Secretary – to be appointed

Class reps

Nursery – Vic Guthrie

P1 – Emma Marshall

P2 - Amanda Blainey

P3 - Sara Shaw

P4 - Sarah McNee

P5 - Laura Stewart

P6 – Laura Sheppard

P7 - Fiona Cain

Outline of Roles

Purpose of the Parent Council - Kirknewton Parent Council aim to:

- Develop a positive and effective working partnership with the school to promote and support learning and wellbeing.
- Represent the views of all parent/carers, giving a voice and increasing active involvement in decision making.
- Report back to parent/carers on matters discussed.
- Promote and establish links to the wider community. (encourage links between school, parents, pupils, pre-school groups & the wider community)

The School Handbook took us to the Scottish Parent Teacher Council Website which has a lot of useful resources (Users Guide to Parent Council, Welcoming New Families Top Tips, Role of the Chair, Role of the secretary, Role of Committee Members).

From this we have summarised roles:

The main roles of the Chair/Vice Chair are to:

- Make sure meetings run smoothly and efficiently; are on time and are run in an inclusive

and friendly way

- Delegate tasks to other members of the group and make sure these are completed
- Make sure all Parent Council members know they are there to represent all the parents in the school – the Parent Forum/School Community
- Act as the spokesperson for the group and liaise with the HT
- Play a part in the school inspection & other formal activities
- Give an annual report to the Parent Forum – usually at the AGM

The main roles of the Secretary are to:

- Support the Chairperson to ensure the smooth running of the PC
- Ensure meetings are well organised and minuted
- Maintain records and hand these on to the next Secretary
- Handle communication and correspondence

The main responsibilities of a committee member/class rep:

- Keep the aims of the parent council in mind when acting on behalf of the group
- Make yourself aware of Parent Council processes (how meetings are run, how to raise concerns etc) and get to know fellow PC members
- Represent the views and interests of all the parents/carers in the school (ensure issues raised are not just one person's view)
- PC members should let parents and carers at the school know about the work of the committee and how they can get in touch.
- PC members should not bring the PC/PSA into disrepute in any way. If a committee member is unhappy with committee business and/or decisions made, they should raise this with the Chair or at a meeting and respectfully encourage further discussion.

8. AOB

Lost property – Pupil support workers are looking through this and returning labelled items to children. Box will also be accessible at Simply Play. Important to ensure that names are clearly labelled on all items to allow them to be returned successfully.

Social event for parent council - Friday 26th August 2022 at 8pm in The Green Room (TBC)

Date for next meeting - Wednesday 31st August 2022 (details to follow)