

BISHOPBRIGGS ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL



MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF THE PARENT COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 23rd APRIL 2019

Present: Gordon Mouldsdale (GM); David Williams (DW); Robert Johnston (RJ); Allison Lunan (AL); Karen Thomas (KT); Alison Keith (AK); Sheena Murray (SM); Jonathan Campbell (JC); Ian Donaghey (ID); Louise Oudega (LO); Cllr Gordan Low (GL); Cllr Gary Pews (GP)

Apologies: Carol Robertson (CR); Provost Alan Brown (AB); Cllr Alan Moir (AM); Brigitte Schillmeier (BS); Jane McGrory (JM); Natalie Storey (NS); Marion McAlister (MM);

1 WELCOME

DW welcomed everyone to the meeting. In the absence of JL, Clerk to the Parent Council, KT took the minutes of the meeting.

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Minutes of 19th February 2019 were approved electronically before the meeting.

Parental Consultation – Ian Donaghey, DHT

Following the discussion on parental consultation surveys at the last meeting, ID updated members on the parental consultation survey trial that recently took place. 233 responses were received. ID felt this was a little disappointing and that returns could have been higher. A copy of the collated responses and analysis will be emailed to all PC members and these will be discussed at the next PC meeting. Comments from the meeting in June can then be incorporated into the School Improvement Plan which is submitted to the Local Authority in June 2019. As the surveys will not be issued until March 2020 there is plenty of time to look at how parental engagement can be increased. Factors to discuss include the length of time given to complete the survey – often when there is a long submission date returns are forgotten and including a space for a parent's name.

ID asked if all parents at the meeting received a link to the surveys. JC did not receive the link. The link was sent out via email and Show My Homework. Not every parent in school has provided a contact email address. Overall feedback from parents was very positive although a few aspects raised need to be addressed. Responses to the survey showed that the preferred option for communication was email.

DW commented that 233 returns may actually be quite a good response. AK agreed and noted that people often do not respond if they have no issues, therefore we should not be disheartened with the number of returns. People who are unhappy with a situation may be more likely to respond. GM noted that we had a response of over 90% to the Education Scotland Inspection Parents' Questionnaire a few years ago, when the national average response was 32%. However, it took a great deal of contact with parents to achieve such a high return rate.

LO suggested targeting the new S1 parents. If they were used to filling in these surveys from the start of their child's secondary school career they may be more inclined to complete surveys the future. RJ

also reminded ID not to be disheartened with the number of returns. Often responses to questions on paper surveys in the past have not been high and where there were comments most were very positive.

DW thanked ID for his input.

3 PARENT COUNCIL AWARD

There were two nominations for the Parent Council award this year. The first was a nomination for a group of S6 pupils who ran a Drama Club for S1 and S2 pupils; the second nomination was for Orla McCarthy and Jamie MacLeod who set up and run a Shinty Club in school.

Orla and Jamie received the majority of the members' votes and were selected as the recipients of this year's PC award. The S6 pupils running the Drama Club will also receive an award at the Awards Ceremony in June.

4 HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

Thematic Inspection – Wednesday 27th March

The Scottish Government are placing a greater emphasis on parental engagement and empowerment. To obtain a greater understanding of good practice across Scotland, Education Scotland representatives have been visiting 140 nursery, primary and secondary schools across Scotland. Prior to their visit we completed a self-evaluation of practice in Bishopbriggs Academy. They visited Bishopbriggs Academy for one day. The day began with a scoping meeting, followed by meetings with pupils, parents and partner organisations. They also held a working lunch with a number of staff. It was a thorough but very positive day and lots of examples of good practice were discussed. Pupils did very well and were commended for their input. A generic report of Education Scotland's findings will be published in the future. GM thanked the members of the Parent Council who participated in the visit.

Exam Preparation

SQA exams begin with PE and Administration and IT on Thursday 25th April 2019. The second block of Supported Study was very well attended as were Easter Revision classes.

Due to the late Easter weekend and earlier start of SQA exams, study leave has been more difficult to arrange this year. For the majority of S4 – S6 pupils, study leave will begin on Friday 26th April. Those sitting exams on Thursday or Friday are able to take study leave the day before their exam if they wish to do so; however, they are being encouraged to attend classes as normal as it is felt this would be more beneficial. The S6 Leavers' Lunch will take place on Friday 26th April.

Staffing Update

Mr Mark Campbell, DHT and Head of S2 will be taking a career break until April 2020. Four Principal Teachers have applied for the post of Acting DHT and interviews will take place in the near future. This will impact on the department of the successful candidate.

A number of posts have been filled recently. Appointments have been made for two Chemistry teachers, a Physics teacher and a Psychology teacher. The calibre of applicants has generally been very high, although the number of applicants for each post is considerably less than a few years ago. This may be due to the fact that some Local Authorities are offering 'Pool' contracts to NQTs. This

guarantees work in that authority with the promise of a permanent contract in one of their schools within two years.

A request has been made to the Local Authority for next year's NQTs.

Kiltwalk – Sunday 28th April 2019

52 pupils and 8 staff will be walking 15 miles as part of Kiltwalk 2019. This is to raise funds for this year's school charity, SAMH.

Awards Ceremony – Thursday 6th June 2019

This year's Dux is Aimie Sutherland and Xavier Drayton-Harrold and Ellie Stewart are joint Proxime Accessit. The Dux and Proxime Accessit awards are made following scrutiny of pupils' S5 prelim results. This looks at the average grade over their five Higher subjects, the average grade of their four top subjects and their placing in each subject. This data is then collated to select the recipients of these awards.

Sportathon – Friday 7th June 2019

This was introduced last year and was very successful. It will run from 8.00pm – 7.00am the next morning. Pupils take part in both outside and indoor activities throughout the night. It is expected that 100 – 120 pupils will take part.

School Show – Tuesday 11th – Thursday 13th June 2019

This year's show is 'All Shook Up'. Tickets will go on sale on 7th May 2019.

Senior Prom – Friday 14th June 2019

This takes place at the Old Fruit Market in Glasgow. 160 pupils and 40 staff will attend with more staff joining later in the evening.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Reform Scotland Press Release

GP reported that Reform Scotland, a non-political think tank, had released a press release raising concern about a narrowing of the subject options offered to pupils across Scotland. It gave the example of East Dunbartonshire Council, stating that pupils generally take six National 5 subjects in S4 whereas pupils in east Renfrewshire can take more. It also noted that pupils in deprived areas are often offered fewer subject options – sometimes as little as four or five subjects. Narrowing subject choice limits choices in future years. GM pointed out that pupils in Bishopbriggs Academy study nine subjects in S3 and seven subjects in S4. Until a few years ago pupils studied the same eight subjects in S3 and S4. GM also noted that studying more than seven subjects along with two periods of core PE and one each of PSE and RMPS leaves little time to complete the stipulated number of hours required for each National 5 subject. The gold standard is five Highers in S5 and many of our young people achieve this. Schools follow a number of different models in S3 – S6, however we are happy with the breadth of experience, levels of achievement and wider opportunities offered to pupils. DW agreed that this was the case at Bishopbriggs Academy. GM added that this is a fascinating debate and that there is likely to be more discussion on this in the coming months.

DW asked if creative subjects were being squeezed out of the curriculum. By the time young people select sciences, a social subject, English and Maths there may not be a lot of room to select subjects such as art, drama or music. GM replied that SMT and PSE staff are very good at encouraging young people to choose subjects which are their greatest strength, particularly if the pupil is particularly good and enjoys a creative subject. The structure of our option choice columns also ensures the opportunity to select a wide range of subjects and this is evaluated each year. Pupils are much more

likely to do well in a subject they enjoy. GM stated that the biggest difference in subject choices is in Modern Languages. Seven or eight years ago approximately 90% of pupils continued with at least one Modern Language until the end of S4, now it is around 50%, whereas there is little difference in the uptake of creative subjects. This is an issue across Scotland.

DW closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – TUESDAY 4 JUNE 2019 AT 7.00 PM