



Mintlaw Academy Minutes of Parent Council Meeting

Date: 29th November 2023

Present: M Brookes (treasurer), S Noble (HT), N Cojocaru, Cllr Powell, L Pirie, Cllr Crowson, L Burnett, P Nicol, V Brown, E Campbell, D Shaw, Cllr Simpson, EJ Whitehead (DHT), K Osterberg (chair)

Apologies: R Stoker

Welcome:

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for coming, especially the three councillors present.

Minutes of last meeting:

no corrections

Propose - MB

Second - KO

Chairperson's report:

Meeting with Lawrence Findlay and other chairs. Attended in-service day curriculum planning at school. Shared positive destinations and exam stats on PC Facebook page. Mobile phones- connected Lorraine with Christine McLennan so they can discuss the presentation/event Lorraine raised at last meeting. A letter written by Claire Rennie (chair Fraserburgh PC) sent to MSP Jenny Gilruth MSP Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, regarding shortage of teachers in the shire was signed by the PC along with other PCs in the shire. Chair was hoping to meet with Ali Hynde about a possible Community Collaboration group that he is interested in setting up and wants the PC to be involved in- rescheduled for next term. Parent query about discipline policy- policy is being looked at and updated. Parent query about places for pupils to eat- S5 getting own area will free up space elsewhere. Parents have been given this info.

Treasurer's Report:

No transactions since last meeting. Current balance £473.21

Marianne continues to work on setting up a charitable trust to enable the school to receive large scale funding and donations for upgrading Tech department equipment and ASA (after school activities) resources. Working with A Hynde and D Shaw to get this up and running. Very time consuming. The regulations say they must fundraise for specific things. Commitment needed for the appointment of Trustees. Help needed to understand legal aspect. D Shaw offered to help here as he has experience. Cllr Simpson also offered help. Discussed Community Benefit Fund from the wind farms which will be looked at. D Shaw suggested that the fundraising committee involves learners (pupils) as well. A sub committee comprising of parent volunteers, pupil and staff reps from school needed.

Head Teacher's Report:

Mrs Duthie off for planned operation, should return start term 3. ROV group met the King and were in Hello magazine as well!

Staffing

- New staff

W Ramsay – fixed term PE (primary background, working towards dual qualification)

H Bishop 0.8 Art

J Paterson appointed to 0.6 maternity cover Business Studies (S Lawson) – will start term 3

English maternity cover re-advertised

- Staffing changes

History Probationer left post, Social Subjects staff now covering this post.

Retirements - P Milne office 37 years service, M Christie PSA 25 years service

Positive Relationships / Celebrating Success

- Positive Relationships Group - currently in process of updating current policy. Focus on celebrating success.
- Facebook – new page created end term 1 – currently 514 followers. Children that have exceeded expectations in Tracking Reports have had their pictures shared on the school FB page and Twitter feed.
- Extra-curricular – 28 different activities running across the week. New points system for involvement. Pupils scan QR code to gain House points. Data will be used in Crew/Reg to encourage involvement, development of new skills and interests.
- Crew S1/2

20 mins in the morning during Registration period. Building relationships, positive behaviour etc. S1/2 Crew is going well. Aim fits with improvement priority of positive relationships.

S1 Check ins, uniform, crew identity, tracking reports – target setting – Crew names presented at assembly – House pride

S2 Crews combined – themes this session have included celebrating kindness and inclusion in the community. Have been handing out compliments cards. EJW (DHT) said she had received one for being kind.

- Refresh Room – a new nurture hub resource forms part of a wider ASL faculty.

Room G3 repurposed to be an inclusion resource with a nurture focus and the staff that support in G3 will use trauma informed approaches to support young people to engage with alternative curricular activities and plan with young people to re-integrate in the mainstream classes when appropriate. This is a much-needed resource.

Staffed by – Mr Noble (PEF funded ASL teacher) and 2 Pupil Support Workers. Our MCR Pathways Coordinator will also be based in the Refresh Room.

The concept has been developed over the past year after visits to nearby secondary schools where similar resources are already in use, namely Meldrum Academy and their “Refresh Room”. The room is not a traditional time out base and any pupils accessing the room will go through a referral process.

Once open, the room will be used for the following:

Breakfast Club; 1-1/small group support; restorative work; nurture; safe space at social times; specific access as a “chill out” space (similar to current chill out card arrangement but specific to pupil needs). It is a work in progress so use will evolve over time.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

- Excelerate initiative has provided staff with the opportunity to take part in Oracy Cambridge training and Project Based Learning. School appointed a fixed term PT Learning and Teaching (G Armstrong) and she is helping to drive forward these improvements in learning and teaching. Oracy = developing skills in listening and talking. We now have 8 staff involved in Oracy Cambridge training. We have an S1 Oracy course built into the S1 timetable. We are also using our learning and teaching DART programme (Staff PL) to filter these approaches out into all faculties and classrooms.
- Project Based Learning – We now have a number of staff trained in this approach. Project Based Learning allows pupils to have ownership of their learning. Pupils work on exciting projects which have a real-life context. Projects are also developed in conjunction with school staff and partners from industry or the community.
- Recent example was an S3 Drama project where pupils created a Halloween walkthrough. Derek Jennings from Friends of Aden was involved in this. A number of these projects are happening across the school. Excelerate has provided us with a Business Community Support Officer who supports in setting up links.
- Cluster Collegiate Session – secondary staff attended a session at a primary school. The aim is to understand each other’s sectors better to support the transition work primary to secondary.

- S4-6 Prelims – 15th Jan will run for two weeks. Exams will return to school building due to increasing costs of using Macbi (£20K)

Study Support Guide – All faculties are now offering study sessions, information will go out to pupils and parents this week.

Skills Progression / Pathways

Our Excelerate Business and Community Support Officer Theresa continues to make links/partnerships. There have been a range of trips/career insight sessions which help to show how classes relate to real life.

- German Career Roadshow at Aberdeen University
- Career insight sessions in school - Scottish Prison Service, Scottish and Southern Electric, Glam Candy
- Supporting Wider Achievement
 - Aden Park Café came into school to support the Barista Group
 - National Progression Award Journalism and Media classes had a session with Reach PLC
- (Not organised by our BCSO) Science – Two Aberdeen Medical Students were in school on placement for 2 weeks and delivered sessions on health careers, supported pupils who want to go into medicine with the interview process, delivered Geography lessons on malaria, and gave pupils CPR training. We also had Science, Higher Human Biology trip to the Surgeons Hall, Edinburgh and & Engineering Science class visited the University of Edinburgh

Curriculum Review

November inset day focused on 21st century curriculum. The day focused on:

- Our school leaver destinations and projected job market over next 5 years – Skills Development Scotland presented on this. 97.4% of our leavers in positive destinations. SDS analyse where our leavers go and what job sectors are available.
- Hayward Review – our Curriculum Leadership Group presented on the Hayward Review and identified areas where we as a school could start to move forward – a BGE elective in S2 and alternative qualifications in the Senior Phase.
- Breakout workshops – focused on Project Based Learning, alternative qualifications (SQA presentation), and Foundation Apprenticeships (Aberdeenshire DYW Team presentation).

Following on from this event the school will be introducing an S2 Elective session 2024/25 (a designated time on the S2 timetable, Friday period 3/4 when all S2s will opt into different projects) A project based learning approach will be used in many of these electives. The school is also introducing more National Progression Awards (NPAs). NPAs are offered at a range of levels and have ongoing assessment. A huge range of courses

are on offer which include barista work, tourism, employability, logistics to name a few. These awards are also very useful for those hoping to go to college or uni and look great on a CV too.

EJW gave a small presentation on the work she had been involved in. Focusing on S1, 2 and 3. Talking to pupils asking what they would like to learn. Active Learning, Project Based Learning to be a focus. 3 projects a year potentially. 12 members of staff overseeing this with floating and cover staff as well. In addition the school is looking to increase the National Progression Awards on offer, where possible. These focus on skills related to work rather than exam based learning.

A parent asked how does the school prepare primary pupils to cope with secondary level homework. SN replied that they have brought in primary school staff and in turn visited local primary schools to help primary school pupils with the transition.

AOCB

A parent raised the issue of bullying and SN advised her to get in touch with her child's guidance teacher. They also asked about school uniform and what happens if their child is not in correct uniform. SN replied that it would be checked at reg and if there was a problem a note sent to the office and a letter sent home.

Next Meeting

Scheduled for 6pm 7th February 2024

Close

The chair thanked everyone for coming. The parents, the councillors and the staff for their input.

Meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Minutes taken by KO