



APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2013

PRESENT:	Vicky Cole	(Chair)	Parent	PSP member
	Dave Neillans		Parent	PSP member
	Derek Simpson		Parent	PSP member
	Ian Smith		Parent	PSP member
	Kim White		Parent	PSP member
	Kath Anderson		Teacher	PSP member
	Colin Dempster		Teacher	PSP member
	Calum Blair		Teacher	PSP member

IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Ingham	Head Teacher
	Rob Greenaway	Teacher
	Linda Bowen	Parent
	Louise Elder	Parent
	Julie-Clare Paterson	Parent
	Mary Benson	Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Greg Cookson, Alison & John Hunton, Donald Smith, Elizabeth Vischer and Councillor Broun-Lindsay.

2. Rob Greenaway, Principal Teacher PE – Update on ePortfolios and Tracking & Monitoring

ePortfolios –Mr Greenaway gave an update on Knox’s ePortfolios, which are used by S1- S3 pupils. EPortfolios are a virtual space online which gives a window into the school life of each youngster by allowing them to record their best work. Staff and parents have access to the ePortfolio and can comment and start a dialogue with the pupil about it.

Progress on ePortfolios has been set back somewhat this year due to the migration of the GLOW system (Education Scotland’s national safe and secure online community for pupils, parents and teachers, where ePortfolios are kept) to a new provider. This is a national issue and has caused frustration in many schools across Scotland.

As a result, Knox has had to change to paper “ePortfolios” this year to get around the problem. The production and ethos of ePortfolios will remain exactly the same this year, the only difference being that they will be created on paper rather than online. Although this set-back is unfortunate, the same systems and procedures will be followed so that the school can seamlessly move back to producing online ePortfolios next year once the problems with GLOW have been sorted out.

Tracking & monitoring - Building on the success of Knox's ePortfolios, (which have been applauded nationally as an example of best practice); staff are working on developing a new system for tracking and monitoring. This new system would be based on the same principles as ePortfolios, together with the core values adopted by the school: wisdom, engagement, respect. The school believe that tracking and monitoring should not be just about marks and results (although these are important and must be recorded), but also about developing the individual pupil in each of the three core values of the school.

Discussions about what form this will finally take are still ongoing, but Mr Greenaway gave a summary of how the school is developing a system for staff to assess each pupil in each subject against the three core values (wisdom, engagement and respect). Pupils would also assess themselves in each subject against these values. The teacher's assessment and the pupil's assessment may not necessarily match up, but both opinions count. Staff would have a discussion with pupils to agree steps that they have to take to improve on each value and on targets that they should aim for. The emphasis is on the student to come up with a strategy, therefore it is hoped that students would be compelled to implement that strategy, since they have been involved in the process. Progress is in the student's hands.

The assessment, strategy and targets will be recorded in each subject for each pupil, with assessments likely to occur 4 times a year. The information will be shared with parents, so that there is less likely to be any surprises on parent's night. It will also be shared with other staff and patterns may emerge across different departments about a pupil's or a year group's progress in school, which would be very useful for staff. Targets would be kept online, where parents could also view them.

Parents at the meeting were interested in these ideas and noted that self-reflection can be a hard thing to do, especially at a young age, but that it is a good skill for pupils to learn. Work has already been done by the English department last year to discuss reflective vocabulary. More discussion about tracking and monitoring will take place both between school staff and with parents and pupils, while this new system is developed.

Vicky Cole thanked Mr Greenaway for his presentation on behalf of the PSP.

Mr Blair left the meeting.

3. Minutes of 30 October 2013

The minutes of the last meeting were approved without change.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

Website link – Ian Smith has set up the link on the PSP website to sign up for email alerts for updates. Vicky Cole thanked Ian for this. Mrs Ingham will publicise it in her next Head Teacher's update. **Act SI**
Modern languages – Mark Wyllie was not at the meeting, so this action point will be carried forward.

Action MW

Mr Greenaway – attended this meeting, as invited by Mrs Ingham on behalf of the PSP.

Activities Week film – Mr Simpson and Mr Blair have uploaded the Activities Week film to the school website, where it can be found in the 'Curriculum' menu, under 'Activities Week'. S1 pupils have been alerted that it is there. Vicky Cole will advertise it to parents via the PSP website. **Action VC**

Reading – Mr Simpson has 9 parent volunteers who will be doing paired reading with pupils identified as needing extra support. Reading will be put on the agenda for the school cluster meeting next week, so that a cluster-wide approach can be taken to reading.

Communication questionnaire – Mary Benson has emailed Knox PSP’s response to Musselburgh Grammar Parent Council.

Parental involvement good practice – Vicky and Mrs Ingham have sent a response to Val McIntyre.

5. Chairperson’s report and action points from the last meeting

See above.

6. Pupil’s Matters

Vicky Cole attended a recent Pupil Council meeting to represent Knox PSP and gave a summary of the meeting and some of the items discussed.

Pupils had raised the social areas and requested more quiet areas. The school has ordered more timber “snake” interior seating for the Rosehall entrance to the school to help with this.

Ball games in the social area are banned, but some youngsters are trying to throw rugby balls around there. This school are policing this.

The school library is to be refurbished and discussions with pupils and designers are ongoing. It is hoped this work will help to encourage youngsters to read.

Vicky enjoyed attending the meeting and hopes to attend another. Parents agreed that the more communication between the PSP and the Pupil Council, the better.

7. Head Teacher’s report

Mrs Ingham noted that this week has been overshadowed by tragic car accident at Tynninghame, in which three Dunbar Grammar School youngsters were killed and a fourth pupil injured. Mrs Ingham has emailed Mr Rafaelli (Head Teacher at Dunbar Grammar) to offer condolences and support and has sent a bouquet of flowers to the Dunbar Grammar staff and pupils from Knox staff and pupils in sympathy. Several Knox pupils and staff know the youngsters involved and it is planned to set aside a quiet room on the day of the funerals for any pupils or staff who may need it.

Staffing - Mrs Ingham gave an update on staffing, mentioning the recent new permanent Computing teacher appointment. Louise Elder was thanked for attending to help with lesson observation of candidates. A part-time permanent teacher of Learning Support post is being advertised and Mrs Ingham will contact parent reps once an interview date is set to see if anyone would like to be involved in the interview process.

News/updates –

S4 Parent’s Night – 3 December, 5-7pm.

Christmas dance – will be held on 10 December and will have a ‘Great Gatsby’ theme. The school’s ‘School Dances: The What? How? And Why?’ sheet will be shared with all those attending.

S5/6 Parent’s Night – 12 December, 5-7pm.

Christmas Concert – 17 December. The 2pm performance will be free and unticketed. Children from the cluster primaries will be invited to attend in the afternoon as a transition event. Residents of local old people’s homes may also be invited. The 7pm performance will be ticketed due to likely demand.

Panto – the dress rehearsal for the panto will be on 19 December and parents will be invited.

School handbook – as requested by parents, a map of the school will be included in the new School Handbook.

Progress / curriculum – Mr Illingworth has asked if PSP members would be willing to be surveyed about curriculum and those at the meeting agreed. Mrs Ingham will forward the PSP email contact list to Mr Illingworth so he can contact parents directly.

Strategic items – The Curriculum Groups have met and are starting to move forward with discussions about curriculum development. It was agreed that Mr Illingworth will be invited to come and speak at the January meeting to give an update on the consultation.

8. Staff member's report

Online book sale – further to Gemma Sandie and Mark Robertson's (Head Girl and Head Boy) visit to the last meeting, Mr Dempster reported that their online book sale forum has been set up as a sub-domain of the school website. It will be publicised shortly to pupils.

S3 History Pupils – Miss Anderson reported that around sixty S3 history pupils will be working with East Lothian Museum Services at the John Gray Centre after Christmas to produce materials for their displays to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of World War 1 next year.

Linda Bowen left the meeting.

Curriculum Design – Mr Simpson gave a short presentation about Curriculum Design and there was a long discussion afterwards about Curriculum for Excellence and the changes it is bringing to schools, staff and pupils.

There was concern that some pupils are becoming excessively stressed due to the number of regular internal assessments required under the new National exams. Once a unit of coursework is completed, an assessment must be made; but since there are so many different students taking a wide variety of courses, it is impossible to prevent the possibility that some students may have to take assessments in several subjects in one day. There is also a high workload for staff this year due to it being the first year of the new National exams.

The school emphasised that it is very important that parents get involved in shaping the new curriculum at Knox. The school are acutely aware that they must get the new curriculum right for the pupils, who only get one shot at this. Due to the number of variables involved, the curriculum will always be a compromise, but it is important to get the best compromise possible for all. This is only achievable with the help of parents. The staff are working with infinite complexity, but working together with parents and pupils will bring a better outcome for all.

Vicky Cole thanked staff for being open, honest and transparent and for including parents in the process. Discussions with parents about curriculum will continue at the next meeting, when Mr Illingworth attends to discuss this.

9. Parent's matters

King's Meadow P4 hockey – Mary Benson thanked Knox staff and students for their input to the Thursday lunchtime hockey training for P4s at King's Meadow and noted how much the P4s were enjoying it.

10. Correspondence – has been emailed out to all.

11. Any Other Business – none

12. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 8 January 2014 at 6.15pm in the school.

Action points	Who	When
Advertise the link on the PSP website to sign up for website updates, in Head Teacher's Update.	SI	As soon as possible.
Forward information on modern languages funding to Mrs Ingham	MW	As soon as possible.
Advertise Activities Week film on PSP website.	VC	As soon as possible