

Pencaitland Primary School Parent Council

Annual Report 2011-12

This has been a successful year for the Parent Council as we continue to develop and strengthen the relationship between the school, pupils, parents and the wider community. We have sought to represent the views of parents, have an input into school policies and work in partnership with the school and its development plan.

The PC held 8 meetings during the course of the year, with good attendance. We have continued to use and regularly update the existing Action Plan which is easily accessible to parents via the Blog. We have also created a Long Term Action Plan to record those ideas which the PC may consider taking forward in future years.

Membership

In August 2012, I took on the role of chair of the PC and we have also gained 5 new members during the course of the year; Rhona Budgen, Colin Henderson, Fraser Clark, Murdo MacPherson and Maureen Egan. Collectively, the PC members have children in each year group of the school.

Unfortunately, our Community Representative Scott Hamilton has had to step down due to other commitments and we are pleased to have recently welcomed Carol Cook into this role.

I would particularly like to thank Jane Scott for her valuable contribution to the PC over the last few years. Jane will be leaving the PC as her youngest child graduates from P7 shortly.

We are therefore looking for one new member to join the PC.

Actions of the PC

- ◆ At the start of the school year, the PC secured a meeting with the incoming deputy head being redeployed to PPS, as agreed with East Lothian Council. This was a positive meeting and the PC were pleased to welcome Fiona Macartney into her post later that term. Following our discussions, East Lothian Council agreed to formulate a policy on the process of Redeployment and invited PPS PC to be involved in this. This is still an outstanding issue and remains on our Action Plan.
- ◆ The PC have supported the school's priorities for development in Curriculum for Excellence this year; Religious & Moral Education and Technology. The PC helped to host a second Grandparents Day at the end of Technology Week, which this year had a specific Technology focus. This event was very positively received and has helped to strengthen links with the wider school community. Many parents commented that they would appreciate a similar opportunity to come in to school and an open afternoon has subsequently been held for parents and carers, this time with an Olympic Theme.
- ◆ In November, the PC consulted parents on Homework. In order to represent the views of a wide range of parents, we carried out an on-line survey, handed out paper questionnaires and held both a day-time and evening focus group for parents. We also held a pupil focus group. The information gathered was used by the school staff to draft a new Homework Policy, which the PC then reviewed. The new Homework Policy has been circulated to parents and will be implemented at the start of the coming academic year.
- ◆ The need for a new stage Sound System had been highlighted by previous parent focus groups. This year, the PC successfully acquired £1,500 from LEADER funding for this purpose and the amount was generously matched by the PTA. We are very grateful to Scott Macdonald (a PPS parent) and David Jack who donated their time and skills to design and install the new system.

- ◆ In May, the head teacher again invited two PC members to attend and contribute to the school's internal audit. The PC is grateful to have this opportunity to be involved in staff discussions as to the school's progress and development.
- ◆ The PC have continued to encourage parents and others in the community to offer their time and skills, either by helping in the classroom or through specific events. The PC have also worked alongside the PTA, assisting them in their successful Awards for All funding application and subsequent renovation of the Nursery Playground as well as supporting other fundraising events.
- ◆ Members of the PC attended regional and national meetings and events, enabling us to exchange ideas with other parents and schools. These included the National Parent Forum Conference and East Lothian PC training sessions. Jane Scott has continued to be our representative at the local East Lothian Association of PC meetings and Carol Snow (a PPS parent) continues her role in the National Parent Forum.

Communicating with the School Community

The PC have sought to continue to increase awareness of the PC's membership and role in the school.

The PC have:

- ◆ Created photos/biogs of the PC members on the Blog
- ◆ Reported to the Parent Forum through per term newsletters, ad hoc letters/e-mails, the Blog, Twitter and also introduced a PC Noticeboard in the playground.
- ◆ Made available the Action Plan, Agendas and Minutes for all PC meetings on the Blog
- ◆ Created a Facebook presence (Pencaitland Parents), which is aimed at all parents (rather than limited to PPS) but can be used as another way of communicating with the Parent Forum.
- ◆ Continued to encourage parents to communicate with the PC using both formal methods (such as the surveys) and informal methods (such as speaking to members directly and via email)

Forward Planning

The PC has already planned to hold a PPS Reading Week from 26th October - 2nd November 2012. The aims of this are multi-faceted;

- ◆ to support the school in its development plan for literacy and raise the profile of reading
- ◆ to involve parents who may not necessarily already be involved with PC/PTA activities
- ◆ to involve the wider community

We anticipate organising further parent surveys (possibly around literacy, including feedback from the Reading Week) and will continually seek to improve upon ways in which we engage the parent forum.

Provisional Date of Next Meeting: Monday 27th August 2012

Sarah Kurt-Elli
Chair