



PINKIE PARENTS
MONDAY, 23 JANUARY 2023 AT 7 PM
PINKIE ST PETERS SCHOOL

Present:

Pamela Grant (Chair)
Gaynor Ross (Vice Chair)
Stephanie Ng (Clerk)
Wendy Barber (Treasurer)
Hiba Khawaja
Hayley Stewart-Forbes
Emma Sinclair-Whiting
Doug Broadley
Carol Brown
Stephen Dishon
Cllr Andy Forrest

Staff in Attendance:

Colette Bonnar (Head Teacher)
Rachel Snowdon (Depute Head Teacher)
Sharon Dixon (Principal Teacher)

Guest Speaker:

Neil Valentine (DHT for Pupil Support at WLC)

Apologies:

Cllr Shona McIntosh
Cllr Ruaridh Bennett
Cllr Cher Cassini
Sarah Ward
Gail Preston
Dan Jardine
Clare Morley
Rebecca Richmond

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 Pamela welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies above, were noted.

2. Matters Arising From Previous Meeting

2.1 Graham MacKenzie has handed over the school extension project to Louise Proven and Stephanie will invite her to the next Pinkie Parents meeting to give an update on the project. Louise will also be asked to get in touch with Chris Milne regarding the funding for the bike shelters. (**Action: Stephanie**)

2.2 Rachel Snowdon is still waiting to hear back regarding the recordings of the literacy specialist Stephen Graham. She will chase them again, and will also see if it is possible to upload the recordings from a different school cluster which will include the same content. This will be carried over to the next meeting. (**Action: Rachel**)

3. Meeting Neil Valentine - DHT for Pupil Support at Wallyford Learning Campus

3.1 Neil Valentine introduced himself, and mentioned how nice it was to be invited to the meeting. He goes on to tell us about himself and his role at the new school (Wallyford Learning Campus).

3.2 Neil has spent 15 years as a teacher, after training in Edinburgh and Aberdeen. He is a geography teacher by trade.

3.3 He has worked in Liberton High School and Craigmillar before moving to Musselburgh Grammar. He has spent the last 5 years as a guidance teacher at MGS for Caird house.

3.4 Neil loves his job in Musselburgh, and is super passionate about wellbeing and getting it right for all pupils and parents. Some pupils just need a nudge in the right direction, and he has had a lot of success with the young people in Musselburgh Grammar. He will use the same approach at Wallyford Learning Campus that he is currently using at MGS.

3.5 He has enjoyed meeting pupils from Pinkie, who asked amazing questions as part of his interviewing process. The children really wanted to know who he is as a person.

3.6 It is a unique opportunity to be there right at the start of a new school opening as everyone can start on the same page.

3.7 Neil will make sure that everyone is listened to and supported and will ensure to make the school experience as positive as possible.

3.8 His main role now is to support with the transitions of S1 and S2 from MGS to WLC and also with the P7s transitions from Pinkie and Wallyford primary schools.

3.9 The most important questions about transitions are anything that the pupil is concerned about, but also being aware of what they love and enjoy and this can be built upon and their ideas carried forward.

3.10 The first couple of years at secondary school can feel like being at the bottom of the pile, but this is a fantastic opportunity to take forward being a leader in P7 to being a leader in S1 at their new school.

3.11 Neil is looking forward to working with the community and will attend more Pinkie Parents meetings when he is able to.

3.12 Neil's official start date as the DHT for pupil support at WLC is 6th march.

Questions

3.13 The headteachers had a meeting last week to discuss transitions for S1 and S2 and more information will be coming out soon.

3.14 Visiting the new school site is not possible for all pupils, but could become available to some.

3.15 There is lots of information on twitter regarding the new school (@WallyfordLC), including updates from the new head teacher, Gail Preston. There are also google forms available for parents to have their say.

3.16 The building work is all on track.

4. Head Teacher's Report

4.1 Mrs Colette Bonnar gave her report and updated the meeting on a number of issues.

Attendance

4.2 In line with the attendance policy, there will be lots of phone calls and letters home as a result of low attendance figures. Low attendance is often the reason for low attainment. Pinkie, and the whole of the cluster, is sitting quite low in attainment figures so there is a big push on that just now.

4.3 Mrs Colette Bonnar met with Nick Trussler after the school was marked as "low" for attainment, and has since moved up to "satisfactory". Sharon Dixon will talk more about raising attainment later.

Website

4.4 There are two members of the teaching staff who can update the school website. The handbooks on there are up to date, but other information is not and Nicola McDowall has said it needs to be updated. Parent volunteers can also help with this.

Newsletter

4.5 It is important to know what parents want regarding newsletters, and how often they would like to receive them. The school may send out a google form to get parents and carers opinions. The diary dates for this term has been sent out in the January newsletter, and it was mentioned that it would also be a good idea to have term dates on the website.

Nurture Group

4.6 There will be nurture group training on Friday.

Library

4.7 Mrs Colette Bonnar said a huge thank you to the parent volunteers who have been helping out with the library, particularly Clare Morley who has taken the lead on it. The library is really taking shape and looks good.

Right Respecting School

4.8 The school has achieved the bronze award for being a rights respecting school, and there are now plans in place to work towards silver.

Building Work

4.9 There has been some issues with the lighting where the new sports hall is being built. The school is working in partnership with families and the out of school club to fix this.

Health and Safety

4.10 There will be a mandatory 3 hours fire safety training during the in service day. Staff will also be going up to Wallyford Primary school for moderation as both schools are in the catchment area for the new high school, and need to work together.

Curriculum

4.11 The principal teachers are currently focussing on writing and numeracy and looking at what needs to be improved. The school is definitely getting back on track after covid.

Staffing

4.12 A new auxiliary has started and there will be an interview for another to take the place of Mrs Cameron.

4.13 Any teacher absences will be communicated to parents on a need to know basis.

4.14 Students will be starting at the school soon as well as speech and language therapists who will be in the school for one day a week for ten weeks.

Resources

4.15 The loose parts is currently closed as it all needs to be refreshed. There is a current request for more loose parts materials.

Questions

4.16 P7 and P1 no longer meet up at play time. This wasn't manageable due to tricky issues with P7s including their behaviour and language which is not acceptable near P1s.

4.17 There has been a new policy issued from East Lothian Council about playground initiative saying that the parent council can no longer be as involved. Colette had a meeting with Louise and Graham which included talking about the playground improvements and what can be done in the budget. The playground policy looks at insurance and structure etc, but whatever is in the building plans will link in with the extension.

Concerns were raised about the length of time the school has been without proper playground facilities. The lack of parental input into any proposals has been a regular topic of discussion and fundraising by the parent council.

Colette will speak to Louise Proven and make sure it is looked at again in the future.

(Action: Colette)

5. SIP (School Improvement Plan) - Sharon Dixon - Raising attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

5.1 Mrs Sharon Dixon thanked the meeting for having her and then went on to explain her role in raising attainment.

5.2 Raising attainment is a high priority in the SIP, and the school is taking a much more concentrated approach this year.

5.3 All teachers in all classes track the children each term and record what level they are at. The teachers then have detailed meetings with the stage leads and look at children who are not on track, and discuss why they are not achieving.

5.4 It is expected that children at the end of P1 will have achieved early level, children at the end of P4 will have achieved first level and children at the end of P7 will have achieved second level. Mrs Dixon is working with the P4s and Mrs McFadden and Miss Palmer are working with the P7s.

5.5 The teachers are looking at a focus group of children who should be able to achieve the expected level by the end of the school session with intervention.

5.6 A detailed assessment was carried out on each child looking for any gaps and what strategies the child was and wasn't using. For example, one group of children was only using the counting on method and using their fingers, whereas they need to focus on ways to make 10, looking at doubles and also the commutative law and inverse relationship. After focussing on these strategies, the children were able to use them when asked numerical questions, and no longer had to count on their fingers.

5.7 If there are 6 children in a class who would be able to achieve first level at the end of P4 with intervention, it means that attainment will rise by 25%. Even if they don't achieve this the child will still be off track for less time once they are in P5.

Literacy

5.8 In literacy the focus is on read, write, inc and looking at alien words. The child is required to read a previously unseen text at about 80-85 words per minute.

5.8 Teachers have observed that the children who attend the focus groups are reading more confidently, are more engaged and their accuracy has been increased.

5.9 The moderation process is really important and useful to make sure that children are being tracked consistently.

5.10 The children who are likely to get first level by the end of P4 has risen from 60% to 88%.

Writing

5.11 There was a small group of children who were lacking in confidence in writing independently. They were able to write alone, but they were not writing enough. This group was worked with closely by using the Stephen Graham approach. They looked at using describing bubbles, word banks, and how to open with "where", "when" etc as well as using VCOP.

5.12 The feedback is that the children are now writing more and with more confidence. Five children who were not expected to achieve the expected level are now expected to.

Questions

5.13 Mrs Colette Bonnar thanked Sharon Dixon for her presentation and mentioned how lucky the school is to have her there with her level of expertise. It is great to hear how well the children are applying what they have learnt.

Will a parent know if their child is in a group?

5.14 The parent will know if their child is in one of the focus groups, as this is communicated. Updated letters will be sent out on the 4th February.

Is it sustainable?

5.15 There are attainment meetings with every teacher, and the teacher knows the child the best. This needs to be sustainable, and is working well so needs to carry on. Sharon Dixon plans alongside the class teacher, and they look together at different approaches to take if needed.

How do children feel being separated for the group?

5.16 It was fully explained to the children that they just needed some extra help. Sometimes the child isn't in the green zone and doesn't attend the group. Generally, the children love the extra attention.

5.17 Children need to own their target setting, and it needs to be open and transparent on why what they are working on is difficult.

5.18 It is easier for children to concentrate and get work done in a quieter environment.

5.19 There are lots of groups going on in the school so it is normal to have children coming and going throughout the day.

5.20 Sharon Dixon often has children stopping her in the corridor to show her some work they are particularly proud of.

6. Treasurer's Update

6.1 The opening bank balance is £3,315.89

6.2 The income is as follows:
£56 from East Lothian Lottery
£16.64 from Easy Fundraising
£551.50 from Cauliflower Christmas cards

6.3 The expenditure is as follows:
£530.50 on books for Christmas gifts

6.4 The closing balance is £3,409.53.

6.5 The balance is as healthy as it could be, and it means we should be able to restart the class funding from August.

6.6 There is enough money to commit to the usual annual spending of P7 hoodies and books for Christmas gifts. It is worth speaking to the hoodie manufacturer soon to hopefully freeze the price.

7. Fundraising Update

7.1 This year Pinkie Parents will be focussing on the Edinburgh Marathon Festival as their main fundraising event. People can choose to run, help out at the stall or help to marshal.

7.2 Hayley has done a fantastic job of getting together 20 volunteers (5 teams of 4) to run as a relay, and 1 person to run the whole marathon, so a huge thank you to her. Pamela will try and advertise to get more people running. **(Action: Pamela)**

7.3 Pinkie Parents needs the stall at the EMF to be in a better spot than last year, and an email will be sent to let the organisers know what we are proposing.

7.4 The sea cadets organise the marshals for the EMF, so Pinkie Parents will need to get in touch with them. **(Action: Pamela)**

7.5 There are no other fundraising events planned. There can't be a summer fair with all the building work going on as it would not pass the risk assessment.

7.6 Pinkie Parents are not currently fundraising for something specific (other than usual annual commitments), so it was suggested for the school to provide a wish list, as it can be hard to push fundraising when there isn't something specific to raise money for. There has recently been more focus on community events to provide an enjoyable experience for the children.

7.7 As the EMF is the only fundraiser this year, hopefully people can focus on it and there will be more volunteers.

8. Any other Business

8.1 Scarlett Palmer will collate the feedback about next year's P7 trip to Benmore and communicate the outcome to parents/carers shortly. Credit Union, ran by the parent council, was used in the past to help save up for Benmore. It was opened when the child was in P1. Other East Lothian schools are doing this, but it was discouraged as there were questions over who holds the money, and Pinkie no longer offer this.

8.2 The AGM will take place in April. Pamela, Gaynor and Wendy will all be stepping down, so if anyone is interested in taking on the role as chair, vice-chair or treasurer then please message Pamela and Gaynor (can send a message through the Pinkie Parents Facebook page) for more information. It could be possible to share the role.

9. Next Meeting Date

9.1 The next meeting date is Monday 27th February.