

MINUTES OF  
PRESTON LODGE PARENT COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON  
THURSDAY, 11 JANUARY 2018  
AT PRESTON LODGE HIGH SCHOOL

Present Lynn Russell, Parent Representative and Vice Chair  
Colin Yorkston, Parent Representative and Treasurer  
Nicky Stannage, Parent Representative  
Malcolm Brydon, Parent Representative  
Dawn Yorkston, Parent Representative  
Russell Devine, Parent Representative  
Judith McNeill, Parent Representative  
Jean Harper, Parent Representative  
Stacey Graham, Co-opted Teacher Representative  
Gavin Clark, Head Teacher  
Cllr Fiona O'Donnell  
Cllr Neil Gilbert  
Jacqui Dunlop, Clerk

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were intimated on behalf of Lynne Lewis, Pamela Currie, Saddah Azziz, Cllrs Bruce and Innes.

2. MINUTES OF 7 DECEMBER 2017

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 7 December 2017 were a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 7 DECEMBER 2017 BUT NOT ON THE AGENDA

a) Longniddry Buses– Cllr O'Donnell agreed to contact Andrew McClellan as there had been no response to the Parent Council communication. (*Action Fiona O'Donnell*)

4. EXAM RESULTS

Gavin Clark circulated statistics on the S5 Exam Results which had been compiled for the meeting with East Lothian Council. He noted that it had been a positive meeting with the Council. Preston Lodge had achieved their best ever Higher results. However, when compared against the virtual comparator school, the gap had increased. Gavin Clark explained that the virtual comparator compared a virtual collection of students against Preston Lodge. The virtual comparator showed 38% achieving 3+ Highers whereas 29% of Preston Lodge pupils achieved 3+.

Gavin Clark felt there was room to improve but felt that the school could not reach its virtual comparator. He noted that this was in common with a lot of schools, but not all as some schools outperform their virtual comparator and he is concerned about this. He felt that across East Lothian schools could be more consistent in logging pupils in areas such as SIMD, free school meals and extra support needs. This impacts the measurements which are used for the comparator schools. He felt that there needs to be more consistent and coherent

measuring so that there is a true comparison.

Malcolm Brydon asked what the implications were of the gap with the virtual comparator widening and Gavin Clark noted that if HMIE came into the school for an Inspection the school would be given a low grade for attainment questioned on attainment, despite record results.

Fiona O'Donnell asked if the results shown looked at the quality of the pass and Gavin Clark confirmed that Breadth and Depth data did not. She also asked if bad results in one subject can have an impact on the results and this was confirmed.

Dawn Yorkston noted that the data is only for S5 and with many pupils doing two-year Highers, starting in S5 their results would not be included in the statistics. Gavin Clark confirmed this and has the S6 data separately, but it is the S5 results which are more commonly used across Scotland for comparison.

Gavin Clark provided data on literacy and numeracy for S5 noting that there is under-attainment with the virtual comparator which was worse for National 5, with numeracy bringing down the figures. Dawn Yorkston asked if the work which was being carried out in the primary schools was starting to filter through? Gavin Clark noted that pupils are still arriving at PL with lower levels of numeracy than literacy.

Gavin Clark noted that with new changes to the National 5 that there will be a greater difference in National 5 and Higher for Maths so changing levels will be more difficult. He noted that the quality of teaching in maths is strong, and numbers sitting maths Highers are slowly rising. Lynn Russell asked about the staffing in Maths and Gavin Clark confirmed that one of the teachers will shortly be going on Maternity Leave but that until then the Maths Department is fully staffed.

Information was provided on initial destinations for pupils, with Gavin Clark noting that two years ago Preston Lodge had the best figures in the authority. The school was 5% down on the virtual comparator. Preston Lodge results showed that those going to further education had gone down, although employment up. He noted that East Lothian Council were content with Preston Lodge's Destination data.

The School does less well in Attainment versus Deprivation against the virtual comparator although there are some areas where the school exceeds the comparator. He noted that where a pupil lives is not a good predictor of the number of Highers they will attain however those receiving free school meals are likely to achieve 1.5 fewer Highers compared to those who are not. This picture is common, unfortunately across Scotland.

The results of the virtual comparator across subjects was shown and discussed.

Gavin Clark noted that the tracking reports will be issued shortly, and the school now significantly understands the data of each pupil so that better conversations with pupils, teachers and parents can be had. There is also a better understanding of what affects attainment such as small group tuition and this will now be targeted on pupils based on the data.

Fiona O'Donnell asked if access to IT had an impact on results. Gavin Clark noted that the school is investigating the provision of Chromebooks for pupils. 95-97% of pupils have internet access at home, but this may not be accessible to pupils as it may be being used by other family

members. Those who are not able to access Google Classroom at home are given access in school and teachers do not set significant amount of homework on Google Classroom. Colin Yorkston noted that research is expected imminently on the benefits for attainment on IT and felt that it would be prudent to wait until the evidence was available before a decision was made, although he was currently not convinced that it would be beneficial to provide pupils with a Chromebook. Stacy Graham explained the benefits that pupils having access to a Chromebook would have on her Department, Art and design. Gavin Clark noted that the Charitable Trust was currently looking at payment models and it was something which needed to be explored fully.

#### 5. PARENT COUNCIL PHOTOGRAPHS

It was agreed that the Parent Council photographs would not be taken and that the current photo-board in the waiting room would be removed.

#### 6. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

- a) Staffing – the school is fully staffed at the moment.
- b) Christmas Events – various Christmas events were held with the feedback positive.
- c) Fizz Free February – there will a ban on fizzy and sugary drinks in February with only water, milk or water with fruit allowed by pupils.
- d) Lagganlia – Gavin Clark reported that all bar 12 pupils in S1 will be attending the trip to Lagganlia. Four parents objected to the payment scheme, but they wished to pay more, a number of students were going for free. There will be a big impact on teachers both those going and those staying. The trip is being funded by the Charitable Trust.
- e) Budget – Gavin Clark noted that there are challenges with the budget, with the falling roll creating difficulties and the number of long term absences. Gavin Clark agreed to give a further update at the next meeting. It was noted that long term absence cover is devolved to schools who are individually responsible, and this can have a huge impact on budgets.
- f) Education Meeting – Judith O'Neill gave a brief update on the Education Consultation meeting that she attended and felt that it was vague with no details plan. Gavin Clark noted that he would not be happy to release Preston Lodge Teachers as they are needed in school to teach. Fiona O'Donnell noted that the consultation is available on East Lothian Council's consultation hub.
- g) Choice Process – S2 into S3 meeting has been led and was very well attended, this may be due to the number of texts which were issued to parents. There seemed to be some confusion as to whether pupils were to attend the evening session with parents as they had already had their own session in the morning, and the text messages confirmed that they were to attend in the evening.

Date of Next Meeting – Thursday, 8 February 2018