



**Priorsford Primary School
Parent Council Meeting Minutes 21.09.23**

Attendees: Keith Russell (Acting HT), Leigh Anderson, Stephen Crombie, Nicola McLellan, Annette Ferguson, Gillian Robson, Sarah Dixon, Rachel Brackenridge, and Kate Gibson.

Apologies: Gillian Foley, Caroline Skea and Sarah Howie

Chairs: Stephen Crombie and Nicola McLellan officially stepped down from their position as joint chairs and were reinstated. Professionally

Headteacher's Update

Mr Russell like thanked the parents for all their continued support. The school is 'all of us, the building, the pupils, the staff, and the parents. It is the partnership we all have that makes Priorsford the positive place of learning that it is'.

The parent Council is a formal way for parents to raise concerns that can be raised at these meetings. However, Mr Russell stressed that if anyone has a concern or simply a question, they should get in touch with the school via the phone, email or pop in to resolve any issues quickly.

Staffing:

Last year saw the retiral of Ms.Macgregor, Mrs Allinson and our NQT Miss Lopez.

The school have welcomed Miss Lorna Murdoch who is teaching one of our P5 classes. Our NQT is Victoria Moore who is working with our P4 children. She is being supported by Teresa Pickburn.

Within the school kitchen we have a new head cook Carol-Anne Chapman.

We are awaiting the outcome of the latest recruitment drive from SBC. The closing date for our vacant Head Teacher post closes on the first of October. They have tried an innovative approach as the council are looking for seven HT's across a number of schools. There was a promotional event hosted by SBC over a two-day period where prospective candidates could attend. Representing Priorsford were Mr Russell, Nicola McLellan, Mrs Crombie (P1 Teacher) and Mr Crombie along with a few P7 children. We met two prospective applicants, one each day. The interviews will be held on w/b 15th October. The interview panel will include PC Chairs Stephen and Nicola. Mr Russell anticipates, should there be a successful candidate, that they will start on 8th January 2024. In the meantime, he is happy to continue in the role as acting HT for as long as it takes to gain a suitable replacement.

Learning and Teaching:

Mrs Anderson is looking for volunteers to help assist in classrooms to help with small groups of children. We would be very grateful for as much support as possible. Currently there are only four volunteers. Mrs Anderson is going to also contact Peebles High School to see if S5 and S6 year pupils, who have free periods, would be willing to help.

Scottish National Standardised Assessment

The Scottish National Standardised Assessments, undertaken in June by P1s, P4s and P7s allow us to track Reading, Writing and Numeracy levels in relation to the national average. Overall, the vast majority of pupils are on track/ tracking well above national averages and attainment is very positive. The school also uses Standardised GL assessments that allows us to compare our P3 – P7 pupils' performance against national UK averages. In reading 95%, writing 87% and numeracy 91% of children are on track or above.

Standardised Testing Results:

At the beginning of term, all P3-P7s also undertake standardised tests in Maths, English and Spelling, which not linked to the Scottish curriculum. The results from these assessments are used to identify areas for improvement. We also can identify children who may require additional support. Our initial analysis shows that 82% of P3-P7s are either on track or above average in English; 88% of P3-P7s are either on track or above average in Maths; and 85% of P3-P7s are either on track or above average in Spelling.

The children are regularly tracked and assessed, and changes made in support as necessary.

Pupil Equity Funding:

Each year the school receives Pupil Equity Funding from the Scottish Government based on the number of pupils with a free school meals entitlement and/or clothing grant entitlement. (£1200 per child registered). However due to school meals being free for P1-5s, the school has had very few families applying for free meals this year, which is affecting the funding that the school receives. This funding is crucial for employing extra staff to provide individual pupil support (e.g., additional needs assistants, nurture work through outdoors activities by Michelle Fraser and gardening) in addition to school uniform/excursion costs/after school support etc. for those families in receipt of this funding.

School Improvement Plan:

The school improvement plan outlines the school's development plans for the session ahead. This year the main focus for the school is to align with the Scottish Borders curriculum, The SBCWay. This is to ensure that that every child across the Scottish Borders will experience the same learning curriculum. This year we are focussing on four aspects of the curriculum - Oracy, Writing, Reading and Numeracy. Independent of the work on The SBCWay, the school will be focussing on improving the Oracy curriculum. We will be using a programme called Voice21 and we will be working with our Tweeddale cluster schools. Within the school, Miss Adamson and Mrs Bell will be helping lead this. The school will continue its focus on Nurture and the existing work on Numeracy and Writing. The Full Improvement plan and summary can be downloaded from the website

Parent questionnaire:

136 parents responded to the questionnaire (approximately a third of families) giving their views on the school values, teaching and learning, partnership working and communication. Overall, the results were very positive and were shared with the community in May.

Showbie:

This is an excellent tool which is used on the children's iPad. Within Showbie there is a mechanism for the children to keep a portfolio to showcase their best work. This portfolio once started will remain with them for the remainder of their schooling. Showbie can be

accessed by parents, and we hope to develop this side of the program in order to address some of the concerns regarding the sharing of children's learning.

Parent Workshop:

Mr Russell has suggested holding another workshop for parents. Over the past few years, the school has held, literacy, numeracy and an outdoor learning workshop. The thought is the next one will be on numeracy.

Homework:

The current system will remain in place with a view that the new Head Teacher will review this once appointed.

Treasurers Report: Annette Ferguson

Last year the PTA had receipts of just over £27,500.

Current bank balance after spending (smartboards, infant playground to name a couple) £17,750.

If anyone qualifies for match funding, please let us know as this is a massive benefit to help boost the funds.

Rep Updates:

Kate Gibson, asked who is receiving the swimming lessons now that the pool has reopened? Mr Russell has confirmed that P3-P6 will be allocated six-week blocks. Kate has also suggested if parents could donate a spare costume so that children who forget their swim wear will still be able to get their lesson. Mr Russell said that there used to be a box left at the swimming pool or school. He will confirm this, but it was agreed this was a good idea.

Kate also asked if the school has anybody with the required qualifications to do outdoor learning since Miss Allinson has retired. Mr Russell has said no member of staff has come forward. However, it's felt that many teachers have lots of experience in supporting their classes with outdoor learning.

Rachel Brackenridge brought up the disappointment by parents but mainly by the P7 pupils that they will not be permitted to do the traditional World War 2 play! It's disappointing that it feels like a missed opportunity for the composite class to be integrated with their peers in the straight 7 class. Mr Russell has said that the P7 pupils will be given the opportunity to do a much more elaborate end of year show. It's felt that this is a long time to wait. Mr Russell has said that he doesn't like the fact the children are unhappy so will look to address this.

Gillian Robson wondered if there would be an opportunity if the school would have an open night before parents enrol their children at the school. Mr Russell has said the next time the school has an open morning that nursery parents will be invited to come in to visit as well. A further update on this will be given at the next meeting.

Parent Council are looking for someone to do the role of secretary, could you please contact Stephen or Nicola if this is something you would be willing to help with.

Next Parent Council Meeting is 16th of November 2023