

WHEC Parent Council  
Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019 – 1.30pm, Conf Room 1

Present –

Emily Bunt (Chair) - EB

Natalie Davidson (Member) - ND

David Young (HT) - DY

Jo Black (Secretary) - JB

Ellie Meikle (Guidance) - EM

Amanda Campbell (Member) - AC

Ken Campbell (Treasurer) - KC

1. Minutes of last meeting - Approved
2. Head Teacher Report

-Curriculum Update – Normal process of curriculum review – looking at the results (what do young people gain by their exit point). Steering group in place consisting of senior staff. National drive to look at S3. Previous model of 2/2/2 criticised for creation of NEET (horrid term) young people. With bringing in CfE it moved to a 3/3 model of more broad general education for S1-3 and then a senior phase. Idea was that it would keep more young people on at school. There is now concerns about how to link S3 and S4, and make the move between the phases more effective. WHEC's "Breadth and Depth" Benchmarks show 90% of pupils will leave with entry level qualifications or better (5@3). 60% will leave with National 4s or better (5@4). Only 4.69% will have 5@5 due to a lot of adverse circumstances. This needs to be the focus statistic for improvement. More groups of pupils need to be ready to sit exams at this level. We want to give these pupils the best chances we can to bring this statistic up. The plan is that by targeting S3 opportunities we are giving them the best chances possible.

Currently they have English and Maths (5+4 periods), 6 choices (3 periods each), Employability (2 periods) and Core input (PE, PSE and RE). This dispersal of time isn't supporting success easily, nor is the arrangement of subject choice by "nodes" as it doesn't take account of individual pupil gifting.

The new arrangement would allow for 8 of English and Maths, 5 FREE choices (4 periods a week each), 1 of employability and 3 of core input so more quality input and enable better (and balanced) subject choices for them. The school is committed to customising something good for each pupil that tunes into what they need and want to allow for the best route out of school for them - college, work or university.

JB – Great plan but how do we explain it to those considering WHEC for their kids?

DY - Looking at Areas of Multiple Deprivation – averages 2.1 (WHEC) vs 7.9 (St Thomas's). St Thomas only gives 3 periods a week per choice (but parents will make up for lost time with tutors etc). Our pupils will get extra teacher time and teaching time and therefore increase the chances of 6 good qualifications rather than 7 poor ones. It's essential to get the 5@5 statistic better. This solution also caters better for

the vulnerability created by only having 1 teacher per subject when there is absences/vacancies.

KC questioned impact of report on “falling standards” due to C of E by Govt. DY pointed out that this is based on usually one statistic (e.g. 5@5) which doesn't reflect our great literacy, numeracy and inclusion. Will be interesting to see what comes of the election in terms of following this up. Our focus will always be on the young people, families and staff we see everyday.

Parliamentary Group Visit – To visit on 14/11 regarding benefits uptake. WHEC has brought in Maximise who have been excellent at improving family circumstances and myth busting. ND – parents have been invited to share about problems with current benefit system. DY – they will also be visiting Calders Community Flat and Broomhouse Young Carers.

Edinburgh Council Resource Audit – 13/1/20 – How are we using all our resources to improve the school? Looking at How Good is our School and this use of resources as a quality indicator. What adds value to our school and brings difference to pupils, especially how do we use PEF and Attainment challenge? Potential meeting with Parent council.

*Attainment Challenge* - £116k (set amount, next year set by how much you use). We need to use this to help children. Our attainment challenge is focused on people and staffing to help our families. 1. Senior development officer – tutoring, S5 plus everyone has an attainment worker (6 pupils to member of staff), run by Donna Heritage. 2. Place2Be will start in school this term with worker and develop a strategy to help mental health of pupils. 3. Targeted attainment teacher – will work with 10-12 pupils in each cohort with multiple barriers and chronic absence who will leave with nothing without intervention.

We want to make sure that school is a positive experience and every pupil can leave with a credible qualification – for their sake and for the changing of perceptions of the school.

*PEF* - £72k (variable amount based on school meals claimed, limited by families that choose not to claim).

- a) Creative Technology course with teacher who will develop our pupil's use of this in classes and then through the school.
  - b) Activities week (S1-S3) choices subsidised and London trip for seniors. Enables young people with barriers to get the chances of others.
  - c) Outward bound strategy to get pupils out of comfort zone and enable them to experience new things plus independence and problem solving.
  - d) Scottish Chamber Orchestra partnership allows for access to instruments and teaching. The concert will be inspirational for our pupils.
  - e) Interventions with pupil groups – e.g. helping those with serious speech impediments on McGuire Program (4 day course)
- AC – will there be support for hearing impaired? Expensive equipment needed.

DY – we are aiming for equity for our kids, not equality. All these plans will be on school website. AC – pointing out study schools as key example. DY keen for more uptake on this as it continues. All we are doing brings gradual change.

Key Dates – 11 Nov – Work experience for S4

18 Nov – Careers Fair for all pupils e.g. seeing full picture of all the opportunities

21 Nov - S4-S6 Parents evening

12 Dec – Christmas concert

3. Working Group Update – WHEC Futures group – KC says latest was the most positive though money and commitment to dates still an issue. Good to see representation from across cluster and parent councils in solidarity fighting for commitments and progress.
4. Anti Bullying/Equality Policies – new from EM, ahead of council revisions. Longer document takes us through schools detailed definitions and approaches but there is also an accessible poster to assist kids in understanding what bullying is (vs banter) and what to do. Relaunched with equality assembly. Lots of staff and pupil training going on e.g. Stonewall, interactive workshops, Healthy Respect relationships training, 10 pupils becoming ambassadors for Diana Awards and will work on online safety and transition times, Equalities group with half termly meeting and drop in service. EB really positive about the posters. EM explained these are pupil driven. DY says EM has taken Wellbeing far further for the kids and it links in with Rights Respecting. Human Utopia coming in for three days in December to add to this. Next meeting Gavin Ellis to update on Rights Respecting School silver award progress. ND asked for poster to be emailed directly to parents. Good to know where to report issues too, reinforced by Pupil Support floor giving them a go to place.
5. Treasurer Report – Council have communicated that payment will come late. Balance still at £4.40 when last spoken to. Need for more signatories and desire to switch bank to more accessible service. Parent council happy for this. EB will be additional signatory in place of Olly Clegg.

#### 6. AOB

- Parents Night (21<sup>st</sup>) - AC and KC to help with coffee at this and make sure there are enough cups. JB will let Janet Walker know.

-Website – need to make minutes more accessible on school website as it is updated. DY to put last few minutes on.

-Locality Meeting – AC met with chair of Nethercurrie PS, Kevin Caley, who was asking about cross country opportunities for training on WHEC school grounds. DY not confident these are safe for use. Has been in touch with council. Keen for them to be used and shared once definitely safe for use. Parents should raise this with council.

Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 1pm