



Oxgangs Primary School – Parent Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 28th March 2017, 7.00 – 9.00 pm, Staff Room

Present: Crerar Christie – Chair (CC), Liz Walshe – Head (LW), Louise Mercer – Teacher Rep (LM), Sue Bellis – Vice Chair & Eco-Group (SB), Ewan Stewart – Treasurer (ES), Patricia Rudolf von Rohr – Secretary (PRvR), Gill Christie – PTA (GC), Ali Haines – PTA (AH), Nicole Carter Johnstone – Communication (NCJ), Richard Imlach (RI), Laura Calder (LC), Gordon Roberts (GR), Tracy Brown (TB), Julie Drake (JD), Lauren McKay (LMcK), Kat Girdler (KG)

Apologies: none

1. Welcome

CC opened with a welcome to everyone. He confirmed that this was an additional meeting to discuss points which couldn't be covered at the previous meeting on 31st January.

2. Approval of previous minutes (31st January 2017)

LC and TB approved the minutes.

3. Matters arising

3 i. Cole Report

CC provided an update. At the Council's meeting, where the report was discussed, Councillor Gavin Corbett raised CC's query around why Oxgangs had been re-opened so quickly after the wall came down. Professor Cole only replied that 'hindsight was a wonderful thing'. This didn't provide a satisfactory explanation nor were there any action points noted in the report resulting from this mistake. As a result CC had written to the press (Evening News) to highlight this point.

There was agreement at the PC meeting that this point had not been satisfactorily addressed in the report. Children and staff were sent back into an unsafe school. CC confirmed that the survey carried out at the time by the civil engineers had not followed best practice. The main point is that this will never happen again, although it was agreed that an apology would be a nice gesture.

ACTION POINT: CC to pick up again, including with Councillors. Possible next step would be public disclosure request.

3 ii. School Inspection Report

CC confirmed that he and LW had attended a meeting of the Council's Subcommittee for Schools and Families. They queried the HMI about the timing of the inspection and the rating of 'satisfactory being the new good', which is unclear to parents.

The replies were that in relation to the timing, an additional month or so later, would not have made a difference to the ratings.

Regarding the ratings, they re-assured parents, that the expected standards overall had increased. Oxgangs was actually the best rated school under the new system. LW confirmed that other schools are visiting Oxgangs to see the good practices here, specifically early learning levels. In addition HMI and the Improvement Inspector are confident that all raised points are being addressed.

LW provided a detailed update on the different points that the school has been working on since the report. Beside refreshing the Curriculum for Excellence, the work is aligned to the 3 areas raised – Pupils understanding themselves as learners, raising attainment and Health & Wellbeing. LW is very impressed how all teachers have stepped up and taken on additional work. LW will include further updates on actions the school takes to address HMI's findings in future Newsletters.

3 iii. Parking

TB confirmed that there hasn't been any process with the new road lines to be painted.

Edinburgh Council's consultation period for this change ended on 17th March. CC wrote on behalf of the Parent Council to support the measure and TB indicated that the local community had met the proposal with broad approval.

CC explained that the white lines around the crossing areas at the P1/2 playground entrance will be changed to Loading Zones. This change will provide a means for the Council to fine anyone parking there outwith the stated times (around drop off).

3 iv. Playground Development

No further update available on the P1/2 playground. There are currently around £2,500 in the playground development fund.

ACTION POINT: CC to pick up with Janet Buckle to agree next steps and timeframes.

LC provided an update on possible fund-raising through Tesco Blue Token initiative: Shoppers in Tesco get blue tokens to choose one of three different causes. All three will get funding - £5,000, £2,000 and £1,000. Applicants just have to fill in an online form and Tesco will then choose the three causes for collection. It was agreed that we should try this for playground funding.

ACTION POINT: LC to complete application.

GR also mentioned that there is a Landfill Community Fund, which might also provide additional funding.

ACTION POINT: GR to investigate Landfill Community Fund.

3 v. Parent Survey

CC confirmed that so far 96 parents had replied to the survey.

3 vi. Sky Opportunity and "Welcome to Oxgangs" film – P6

Not discussed at this meeting.

3 vii. P7 Leaving party organisation

Not discussed at this meeting.

3 viii. Tech Club / Lego Club / Other activities

Not discussed at this meeting.

3 ix. Allermuir (Firrhill) Partnership Centre

Not discussed at this meeting.

4. Update reports

4 i. Head teacher report (LW)

LW confirmed that Mr Blaikie has been recruited as acting deputy head. He joins from Carrick Knowe, where he is a Principal Teacher, and will hopefully start after the Easter holidays.

4 ii. PTA

Not discussed at this meeting.

4 iii. Communications

Not discussed at this meeting.

4 iv. Playground Development Group and ECO Group

Not discussed at this meeting.

4 v. South West Neighbourhood Group

Not discussed at this meeting.

4 vi. Breakfast Club Funding Group

Not discussed at this meeting

4 vii. (Road) Safety Group

Not discussed at this meeting.

5. Engagement

RI provided a background explanation on this topic, covered in summary slides. (**Suggest to add these to website?**)

RI also attends the Firrhill High School Parent Council, where there had been a discussion on parental engagement and its positive impact on pupil attainment. Attainment is very difficult to achieve across the different catchment areas. The Firrhill Head therefore asked the Parent Council to improve parental engagement. The Head has extensive experience of Engagement from the Head's previous role in a London school. The suggestion is, that if levels of parental engagement can be improved at Primary school, then the approach would be less alien to parents at High School, where it is traditionally harder to realise, but where it has been shown to have a significant impact on raising attainment.

He went through a toolkit of 7 Strategies, covering Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Family Learning, Decision-making, Collaborating with the Community and Remote Involvement. On this basis, various ideas were discussed during the meeting, such as Fresher Meeting for new P1 parents, representatives at the Parent Council from each year/class, WhatsApp Groups per year/class and Parent Questionnaire on how to spend Parent Council money. The website of South Morningside Primary School was looked at as a good example to increase parent engagement.

ACTION POINT: RI to lead Engagement Sub-Committee. Any volunteer to contact RI.

ACTION POINT: To increase clarity, the PTA will change its name to 'Fundraising' and the PTA Facebook Site to 'Parent Community'.

ACTION POINT: CC to add Engagement to next meeting's Agenda.

6. Pupil Equity Funding

LW explained that this is a Scottish Government initiative where all schools receive additional funding specifically in support those children who require more support than others to reach their full potential. Each school has to decide how best to spend this money. Oxfams will receive £57,000 per year over the next 5 years.

Ideas on how best to spend this fund have been gathered from all pupils, staff and parents.

Pupils have held their first "Pupil Voice Gathering" where all classes could present their ideas. They put forward many suggestions, such as:

- Free fruit trolley for snack
- Old school uniforms handed into school
- Free pens/pencils for children who don't have any
- Free places at breakfast club
- Toy-Bank
- More playground-buddies
- Celebrate achievements in class
- Homework-time with older children

Staff also had many suggestions, for example:

- Special spaces in the school for children not managing their emotions
- Someone to go into the community to reach hard-to-reach parents
- Someone to support children to get to school regularly and on time
- Staff supporting children in crisis
- Mentoring children in difficult circumstances
- Support groups to engage parents
- Support children on how to play
- Free fruit

Parents also suggested ideas, such as free places at camps/after-school club.

LW confirmed that some of this points are already available to children who need it, such as free places at breakfast club or financial support for camps etc. LW is still gathering opinions. Clear guidelines have to be followed for the spending of this fund, and agreement from the Parent Council will be required.

ACTION POINT: AH to put request on Facebook Page for unused school uniforms to be handed into school.

7. AOCB

No AOCB discussed.

8. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 30th May 2017 at 19.00h