

Parent Council

TUESDAY 14/11/2023

Forrester High School

Present; Jackie Barn (Deputy Chair), John Johnstone (Acting Head Teacher), Emma Spence (Treasurer), Sandra Donaldson (Secretary), Sann Hamilton, April Forsyth, James Hardacre, Kate Givan, Cllr Euan Hyslop, Julie Scott

1. Welcome Welcomed JJ – standing in for Stephen Rafferty as he is absent from school at the moment. He expects to be there until Christmas at the moment.

2. Apologies/ action points. Mark Peart, Laetitia Wilson, Sarah Segovia

- JB confirmed chair report received and JH confirmed on PC website
- SD contacted Connect, and they said a solution was to have a temporary rotating Chair if no volunteers until someone takes the role. JB will run through Chair/Deputy Chair role next meeting
- Parents evening dates sent out and volunteers from PC for all dates. Volunteers also attended the coffee evening
- JB has spoken to John MacPhie about funding requests for extra curriculum activities
- JB and ES to discuss plans for PC money next year and consider applying for funding for external local organisations. LW had some ideas where to ask

3. Head Teacher Update/4. Supported self-evaluation

Self Evaluation – this was the second SSE, and the next step will be an inspection. The school's self evaluation is to support the continued progress through each indicator. Inspection usually takes place every 6 years, however it has now been 10 years since an inspection has been carried out. A previous mini-inspection was carried out (SEE) – the summary of findings report is on the website, and this was to quality assure the schools self-evaluation.

[Head Teacher Update 06.11.23 - Forrester High School](#)

Strengths included:

The values displayed in the school (Respect, Believe, Achieve)
Positive relationships and calm and purposeful learning environments
Improved quality of Learning and Teaching

The school continues to focus on improving attainment for all. This is supported through equity funding to ensure barriers to learning are reduced. The school will continue co-constructing learning – hearing student voices. The aim is to continue to motivate young people so that the school can support young people to achieve all they can.

The school is encouraging the pupils to embrace 3 behaviours – be ready, be respectful and be responsible. In return there will be rewards communicated with home

There are a number of new partnerships being introduced to support and motivate young people. These include Gold and Gray, My Adventure and EH5.

The school will continue to look for other opportunities and experiences to reward young people for going over and above.

There will be an Outward Bound project also which would be residential trips for S1/S2/S3. There will also be Duke of Edinburgh again this year.

To improve attainment there will be more subjects but less periods for subject selection, and this will be implemented from S3 instead of S4. Achievement is linked to attainment to add to a pupil's overall performance. The school are conscious to get things right going into S4 as this feeds into S5/S6.

The recruiting issues are ongoing, and cover teachers are under-staffed. There should be 3 PSA, however have managed to get 2 PSO who are higher grades of staff. There is currently one Maths vacancy with 7 applications in. 2 PSA's were appointed on Friday. Looking to get a development Officer, which is one grade below Curriculum Lead. A member from Social Subjects is retiring.

Parent discussion: Everyone needs resources to catch-up post covid. P6/P7 pupils were affected by not going to camp/leavers dances etc and seem to be more withdrawn. Also considering an Intro to Senior event (residential camp?). Looking for equity for anxious pupils who find it difficult to socialize. Aiming to give Student Voice stronger presence in school. HT agreed and would like to continue to discuss options with parents.

The school is also aware that teachers need to focus more on learning and not to be distracted by behaviour issues in the classroom. Covid cannot continue to be blamed for behaviour issues and the pupils need to understand there will be consequences, to protect the learning of others. Forrester has a lot of potential and just need to find ways to unlock it.

This is affecting many different age groups and the school believes that opportunities inspire good behaviour, such as learning non traditional skills. The school has received £2,000 Princes Trust funding to purchase a barista machine and Coffee Conscious are coming in to train pupils.

For National qualifications, the Hayward Review has resulted in SVQs etc to be counted as qualifications. This has also resulted in moving towards continual assessments. JS queried whether 7 qualifications would put too much pressure on pupils. JJ explained some students may wish to take more, however there is a lack of flexibility at the moment. Shortages of teachers also cause an issue with course choices.

Subject selection reduces from 7 in S4 to 5 in S5/S6. Small changes can make a big difference.

5. Treasurers update

The funding application has been made, however has not been received yet. The balance in the account is low - £33.37 – due to payments made:

£300 referees fees

£350 football strips

There is an expected payment of around £900 due once the application has been processed. LW has approached a local Lodge for £150 in funding. Proposed spending normally includes:

Activities week

Study support refreshments

Soup for parents evening

YPI (postponed this year)

Confirmation from JJ that the school applied for Strategic Equity funding in May but this has not yet been released by the Council. This was to be used for staffing for the new term, but the money has still not been received. The money used to be allocated to specific schools for raising attainment however this has now been centralized for the whole of Edinburgh and a strategic allocation made. No adverts can be posted as the funding has not been released and it's now too late to be value for money.

6. Parent evening/PC volunteers

Thanks to everyone who has volunteered.

7. How can we get more people involved in PC?

A suggestion was made to go out to the Primary School PTA meeting for P7's going into S1, to promote the Parent Council.

Setting up of events – to be carried forward JB

Raising Teens With Confidence – could key points be put on website?

Family learning opportunities – could there be courses or taster sessions?

8 A.O.B

Toilets – there have been issues with some teachers allowing toilet breaks during class. This should be professional judgement. Especially with senior phase. Some pupils don't want toilet passes as they would find this embarrassing. Not all teachers have keys to faculty toilets – are more keys being cut? A request has been made for more keys to be cut. The issue is that some pupils don't want to use the main toilets as there has been damage/vaping, which is also causing the school issues. Could there be more toilets opened during break/lunch?

Meeting ended 9.10

Action points

- JB to run through Chair/Deputy Chair role next meeting
- JB and ES to see about sponsorships or donations from external organisations
- EH to look into release of funding for Equity and P

Dates of PC meetings:

12 September 2023

14 November 2023

16 January 2024

12 March 2024

23 April 2024

11 June 2024 (AGM)