

Parent Council

TUESDAY 23/01/2024

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, Laetitia Wilson, Susan Stevens, Oldav Mustafa

1. Welcome

2. Apologies/ action points. Mark Peart, Julie Scott, Euan Hyslop

- JB to run through Chair/Deputy Chair role next meeting – c/f to next meeting
- JB and ES to see about external funding from Corstorphine Trust & Corstorphine Rotary Club
- EH to look into release of funding for Equity and PC – See Treasury update

3. Head Teacher Update

JJ thanked those who attended the parent's inspection meetings. The PC will receive a letter regarding the inspection.

Due to what happened during the week of inspection, JJ can only provide brief findings at the moment and the full report will be published in due course.

Some areas where positive feedback was received:

- Positive relationships
- Focus on Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- Collaborative working
- Equity/wellbeing
- Values

Senior Leadership Team (SLT), complimented on collaborative working and professionalism.

There are 4 quality indicators based on learning and achievement, attainment, pace/ challenge and aspirations.

There has been no trend in attainment between 2017 to 2022. They only look back over what has happened over the last 5 years. There will be a further visit in 12 months after the report is published. There is no comparable data that shows improvement over 5 year period. There has been improvement in the last 18 months, starting to make progress for S4 but this is not flowing to S5/S6 at the moment, which is why a further visit is required.

Literacy and numeracy is good, however attainment was questioned. The average tariff points for all groups top/middle/bottom is 20/60/20. There is a virtual comparator with other schools.

Most of the negative comments were statistical and the teachers pushed back on this and fought for the school around what positive work is happening. There is quite a mixed population within the school with different demographics. There appeared to be differing opinions between inspectors.

Attainment was valued more during the visit, rather than overall attainment/wellbeing and the support being given to students. Some courses don't offer awards such as national 4/5 awards, they're based on continual assessment pathways (as per the Hayward review).

Staffing has been an ongoing issue for a number of years. This is starting to look more positive.

The teachers gave good feedback to the inspectors about the positives going on within the school. The report will be published with a link in the letter. The published report could affect parent choices about where to send their children. Despite support being needed, funding cuts have been proposed. SLT are working on a long term plan.

Staffing:

- 2 new Math's teachers, now fully staffed – possibly 1 extra - one replacement and one probationer, matching the 4 requested. This is the biggest subject affected, the staffing has to be there to achieve improvement
- 1 new Geography needed
- 1 new Home Economics (HE) needed
- 1 new Computing (there has been a shortage of teachers) in post
- 1 new Curriculum Lead in Modern Languages from last week in post
- 1 new Social Subjects in post

For raising attainment, there will be a focus on L&T, there are 2 development posts, 2 applicants so far. The school has lost the CL for the wellbeing hub, which is currently being advertised. There is also a shortage for RME. There is another PSO currently aligned to the House Teams. There is 2 open posts for the office, currently being advertised.

The current budget to be carried forward is approx. £70k, which is 1.5% of the budget. There is still one PSA in the ESB Hub. A Counsellor started on 10 January. 68% of pupils are ASN.

The school is quite a calm environment and there is less disruption in classes. Action plans are in place for disruptive pupils to protect the learning of others. The school will consider exclusions if they will have an impact and will try to get parents into the school.

There are 28 support groups across the school, supporting 157 students, including those on waiting lists.

The school is looking into a change in the school day, so that there are more periods within the same hours. Considering cancelling the DMT session first thing in the morning to allow more learning time within classes (this equates to 35 hours a year). The school is also looking at using different media to evaluate learning such as Show Board, Kahoot etc.

Also clear consideration around alignment through subject choice.

For S3, it will drop from 9 subjects to 7 subjects in S4. There is a planned 3 year journey through the senior phase (S4 to S6). The model is imposed by the Scottish Government. There is a rule that appears to prevent a pupil taking a language if they don't also take French.

There are 2 upcoming Raising Teens with Confidence courses coming up. There is also a Family Learning Plan in progress, which will be family events in school such as cooking classes. The school is also waiting on additional keys from Mitie for the toilets so teachers can allow access during class time. The school is trying to put additional measures in place and there has been an assembly on this. Further assemblies are required to cover some other issues.

4. Treasurers update

The funding for this year of £943 has now been received. Thanks to EH for chasing this.

Proposed spending normally includes:

Activities week

Easter Study support refreshments

Soup for parents evening

YPI - this is now back on. JB to speak to KMacP

ES still to cash the cheque received from the Laetitia for £150, and a receipt is still to be done. JB/ES will see if further funding can be given by the Corstorphine Trust and the Rotary Club

5. Next Parents Evening – 27/02 Parent evening/PC volunteers

Thanks to everyone who has volunteered. JB has asked Eilidh McLaren if there is capacity to do coffees/soup. Staff were trained as baristas today, and pupils are getting trained on Thursday.

6. PC Chair – what's involved

c/f to next time. SD to check what's on at Connect. JB to send a summary of what's involved as time ran out to discuss.

7. Wider experience/school trips

Outward Bound is being planned for next term in 2025, which could cost up to £330. There has been a good uptake with staff – 6 volunteers. Nothing planned for overnight trips at the moment but possibly look into funding for foreign trips for languages in future. The school wants to start planning regular trips. There is an upcoming football trip – 48 spaces. The school wants to try and have something that feeds into the curriculum.

Work experience has been paused for the last couple of years, but keen to restart. Looking to take a flexible approach but there are workload considerations. In S3 there is My World of Work. There are chances for work experience on Fridays but a lot of employers want pupils to be over 16.

8. Family learning ideas

Possibility of learning with children in school. For the Improvement plan there will be targeted support, perhaps with things like languages. Each faculty has been asked to run an event on their subject and how to learn at home.

The P7 open day will be in October/November. For things like cooking and woodwork engaging the pupils can in turn engage the parents.

To be discussed in more detail at next meeting.

9. Ideas to encourage more parents to attend PC

C.f to next meeting. There are other platforms of communication being used in other schools. The DPIA has been in place for years but some servers are now outside the EU. Looking at Apps that track what the pupils are doing in school to have class charts.

10. A.O.B

There has been an announcement about £8m proposed budget cuts

Meeting ended 9.00

Action points

- JJ to establish the position re languages – can't study one without taking French
- JB to speak to Kate MacPhie about YPI funding needs
- JB and ES to see about external funding from Corstorphine Trust & Corstorphine Rotary Club
- SD to check Connect for upcoming events
- JB to send a summary of role of Chair
- ES to cash £150 cheque and send receipt
- EH to update position on proposed budget cuts

Dates of PC meetings:

12 September 2023

14 November 2023

16 January 2024

12 March 2024

23 April 2024

11 June 2024 (AGM)